ST. LEON:

A

TALE

OF THE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude.

CONGREVE.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
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PREFACE.

THE following paſſage from a work, ſaid to be written by the late Dr. John Campbel, and entitled *Hermippus Redivivus*, ſuggeſted the firſt hint of the preſent performance.

"There happened in the year 1687, an odd accident at Venice, that made a very great ſtir then, and which I think deſerves to be reſcued from oblivion. The great freedom and eaſe with which all perſons, who make a good appearance, live in that city, is known ſufficiently to all who are acquainted with it; ſuch therefore will not be ſur-

priſed, that a ſtranger, who went by the name of ſignor Gualdi, and who made a conſiderable figure there, was admitted into the beſt company, though no body knew who or what he was. He remained at Venice ſome months, and three things were remarked in his conduct. The firſt was, that he had a ſmall collection of fine pictures, which he readily ſhewed to any body that deſired it; the next, that he was perfectly verſed in all arts and ſciences, and ſpoke on every ſubject with ſuch readineſs and ſagacity, as aſtoniſhed all who heard him; and it was in the third place obſerved, that he never wrote or received any letter; never deſired any credit, or made uſe of bills of exchange, but paid for every

every thing in ready money, and lived decently, though not in ſplendour.

" This gentleman met one day at the coffee-houſe with a Venetian nobleman, who was an extraordinary good judge of pictures: he had heard of ſignor Gualdi's collection, and in a very polite manner deſired to ſee them, to which the other very readily conſented. After the Venetian had viewed ſignor Gualdi's collection, and expreſſed his ſatisfaction, by telling him, that he had never ſeen a finer, conſidering the number of pieces of which it conſiſted; he caſt his eye by chance over the chamber-door, where hung a picture of this ſtranger. The Venetian looked upon it, and then upon him. This picture was drawn

for you, ſir, ſays he to ſignor Gualdi, to which the other made no anſwer, but by a low bow. You look, continued the Venetian, like a man of fifty, and yet I know this picture to be of the hand of Titian, who has been dead one hundred and thirty years, how is this poſſible? It is not eaſy, ſaid ſignor Gualdi, gravely, to know all things that are poſſible; but there is certainly no crime in my being like a picture drawn by Titian. The Venetian eaſily perceived by his manner of ſpeaking, that he had given the ſtranger offence, and therefore took his leave.

" He could not forbear ſpeaking of this in the evening to ſome of his friends, who reſolved to ſatisfy themſelves by looking upon the picture

picture the next day. In order to have an opportunity of doing ſo, they went to the coffee-houſe about the time that ſignor Gualdi was wont to come thither, and not meeting with him, one of them who had often converſed with him, went to his lodgings to enquire after him, where he heard, that he had ſet out an hour before for Vienna. This affair made a great noiſe, and found a place in all the news-papers of that time." *

* To this ſtory, in the book from which I have quoted it, is ſubjoined the following reference, " *Memoires hiſtoriques*, 1687, tom. i. p. 365." Being deſirous of giving my extract from the eldeſt authority, I cauſed the Britiſh Muſeum, and the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge to be ſearched for this publication, but in vain. The ſtory and the reference are, not improbably, both of them the fictions of the Engliſh writer.

It is well known that the philoſopher's ſtone, the art of tranſmuting metals into gold; and the *elixir vitæ*, which was to reſtore youth, and make him that poſſeſſed it immortal, formed a principal object of the ſtudies of the curious for centuries. Many ſtories, beſide this of ſignor Gualdi, have been told, of perſons who were ſuppoſed to be in poſſeſſion of thoſe wonderful ſecrets, in the ſearch of which hundreds of unfortunate adventurers waſted their fortunes and their lives.

It has been ſaid of Shakeſpear, that he

Exhauſted worlds, and then imagined new;*

* Johnſon's occaſional Prologue on Garrick's aſſuming the management of Drury-lane Theatre.

but

but the burthen ſuſtained by Shakeſpear was too heavy for the ſhoulders of any other individual. I leave the firſt part of the taſk above mentioned to be divided among thoſe celebrated noveliſts, living and dead, who have attempted to delineate the ſcenes of real life. In this little work I have endeavoured to gain footing in one neglected track of the latter province. The hearts and the curioſity of readers have been aſſailed in ſo many ways, that we, writers who bring up the rear of our illuſtrious predeceſſors, muſt be contented to arrive at novelty in whatever mode we are able. The foundation of the following tale is ſuch as, it is not to be ſuppoſed, ever exiſted. But, if I have mixed human feelings

ings and paſſions with incredible ſituations, and thus rendered them impreſſive and intereſting, I ſhall entertain ſome hope to be pardoned the boldneſs and irregularity of my deſign.

Some readers of my graver productions will perhaps, in peruſing theſe little volumes, accuſe me of inconſiſtency; the affections and charities of private life being every where in this publication a topic of the warmeſt eulogium, while in the Enquiry concerning Political Juſtice they ſeemed to be treated with no indulgence and favour. In anſwer to this objection all I think it neceſſary to ſay on the preſent occaſion, is that, for more than four years, I have been anxious for opportu nity

tunity and leiſure to modify ſome of the earlier chapters of that work in conformity to the ſentiments inculcated in this. Not that I ſee cauſe to make any change reſpecting the principle of juſtice, or any thing elſe fundamental to the ſyſtem there delivered; but that I apprehend domeſtic and private affections inſeparable from the nature of man, and from what may be ſtyled the culture of the heart, and am fully perſuaded that they are not incompatible with a profound and active ſenſe of juſtice in the mind of him that cheriſhes them. The way in which theſe ſeemingly jarring principles may be reconciled, is in part pointed out in a little book which I gave to the public in the year 1798, and which I will here therefore

therefore take the liberty to quote.

" A ſound morality requires that " nothing human ſhould be regarded by us as indifferent;" but it is impoſſible we ſhould not feel the ſtrongeſt intereſt for thoſe perſons whom we know moſt intimately, and whoſe welfare and ſympathies are united to our own. True wiſdom will recommend to us individual attachments; for with them our minds are more thoroughly maintained in activity and life than they can be under the privation of them, and it is better that man ſhould be a living being, than a ſtock or a ſtone. True virtue will ſanction this recommendation; ſince it is the object of virtue to produce happineſs, and ſince the man who lives in the midſt of domeſtic relations,

relations, will have many opportunities of conferring pleaſure, minute in the detail, yet not trivial in the amount, without interfering with the purpoſes of general benevolence. Nay, by kindling his ſenſibility, and harmoniſing his ſoul, they may be expected, if he is endowed with a liberal and manly ſpirit, to render him more prompt in the ſervice of ſtrangers and the public." Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Ch. VI, p. 90. IId. Edition.

*** For the ſake of the unlearned reader, I ſubjoin the following illuſtration of the motto prefixed to theſe volumes.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was a Portugueſe, born about the year 1510. Becoming a fugitive from his country at a very immature age, he travelled through many parts of Afri-

ca

ca and Asia for twenty-one years, and, by his own account, encountered a surprising number of distressful adventures. The translation of his travels into French forms a very thick volume in quarto, and bears date in the year 1628.

Vicissitudes de la Fortune, 12mo, Tom. I, p. 1.

Nov. 26, 1799.

TRAVELS
OF
ST. LEON.

CHAP. I.

THERE is nothing that human imagination can figure of brilliant and enviable, that human genius and ſkill do not aſpire to realize. In the early ages of antiquity, one of the favourite topics of ſpeculation was a perfect ſyſtem of civil policy; and no ſooner had Plato delineated his imaginary republic, than he ſought for a ſpot of earth upon which to execute his plan. In my own times, and for upwards of a century before them, the ſubject which has chiefly occupied men

of intrepid and perſevering ſtudy, has been the great ſecret of nature, the *opus magnum*, in its two grand and inſeparable branches, the art of multiplying gold, and of defying the aſſaults of infirmity and death.

It is notorious that uncommon talents and unparalleled induſtry have been engaged in this mighty taſk. It has, I know, been diſputed by the audacious adverſaries of all ſober and reaſonable evidence, whether theſe talents and induſtry have in any caſe attained the object they ſought. It is not to my purpoſe to aſcertain the number of thoſe whoſe victory over the powers and inertneſs of matter has been complete. It is enough that I am a living inſtance of the exiſtence of ſuch men. Theſe two ſecrets, if they are to be conſidered as two, I have been for years in the habit of reſorting to for my gratification. I have in my poſ-

ſeſſion the choice of being as wealthy as I pleaſe, and the gift of immortal life. Every thing that I ſee almoſt, I can without difficulty make my own; for what palaces, pictures, parks or gardens, rarities of art or nature, have not a price at which their owner will conſent to yield them? The luxuries of every quarter of the world are emptied at my feet. I can command, to an extent almoſt inconceivable, the paſſions of men. What heart can withſtand the aſſault of princely magnificence? What man is inacceſſible to a bribe? Add to theſe advantages, that I am invulnerable to diſeaſe. Every ſun that riſes, finds the circulations of my frame in the moſt perfect order. Decrepitude can never approach me. A thouſand winters want the power to furrow my countenance with wrinkles, or turn my hairs to ſilver. Exhauſtleſs wealth and eternal youth,

theſe are the attributes by which I am diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of mankind.

I do not ſit down now to write a treatiſe of natural philoſophy. The condition by which I hold my privileges is, that they muſt never be imparted. I ſit down purely to relate a few of thoſe extraordinary events that have been produced in the period of my life which is already elapſed, by the circumſtances and the peculiarity to which I have juſt alluded.

It is ſo obvious, as to make it almoſt improper to ſpecify it, that the purſuit in which ſo many of my contemporaries are engaged, and the end of which I have ſo ſingularly atchieved, is in its appearance infinitely more grand and intereſting, than that which occupied the thoughts of Plato and the moſt eminent writers of antiquity. What is political liberty, compared with unbounded riches and immortal vigour?

The

The immediate application of political liberty is, to render a man's patrimony or the fruits of his induſtry completely his own, and to preſerve them from the invaſion of others. But the petty detail of preſervation or gradual acquiſition, can never enter into competition with the *great ſecret*, which can endow a man in a moment with every thing that the human heart can wiſh. Conſidered in this light, how mean and contemptible does the ambition of the boaſted ancients appear, compared with ours? What adept or probationer of the preſent day would be content to reſign the ſtudy of God and the profounder ſecrets of nature, and to bound his ardour to the inveſtigation of his own miſerable exiſtence?

It may ſeem perhaps to many, that the hiſtory of a perſon poſſeſſed of advantages ſo unparalleled as mine, muſt be like the hiſtory of paradiſe, or

of the future happineſs of the bleſſed, too calm, and motionleſs, too much of one invariable texture and exempt from viciſſitude, to excite the attention or intereſt the paſſions of the reader. If he will have patience, and apply to the peruſal of my narrative, he will in no long time perceive how far his conjecture is founded in ſagacity and reaſon.

Some perſons may be curious to know what motives can have induced a man of ſuch enormous wealth, and ſo every way qualified to revel in delights, to take the trouble of penning his memoirs. The immortality with which I am endowed ſeems to put out of the queſtion the common motives that relate to poſthumous fame.

The curioſity here mentioned, if it really exiſts, I cannot conſent to gratify. I will anticipate nothing. In the progreſs of my ſtory, my motive for

for recording it will probably become evident.

I am deſcended from one of the moſt ancient and honourable families of the kingdom of France. I was the only child of my father, who died while I was an infant. My mother was a woman of rather a maſculine underſtanding, and full of the prejudices of nobility and magnificence. Her whole ſoul was in a manner concentrated in the ambition to render me the worthy ſucceſſor of the counts de St. Leon, who had figured with diſtinguiſhed reputation in the wars of the Holy Land. My father had died fighting gallantly in the plains of Italy under the ſtandard of Louis the Twelfth; a prince whoſe name was never repeated to me, unaccompanied with the praiſes due to his military proweſs, and to the ſingular humanity of diſpoſition by which he acquired the title of *The father*

of his people. My mother's mind was inflamed with the greatneſs of my anceſtors, and ſhe indefatigably ſought to kindle in my boſom a ſimilar flame. It has been a long-eſtabliſhed cuſtom for the barons and feudal vaſſals of the kings of France to enter with great perſonal expence into the brilliant and dazzling expeditions of their ſovereigns; and my father greatly impaired his fortune in preparations for that very campaign in which he terminated his life. My mother induſtriouſly applied herſelf to the reſtoration of my patrimony; and the long period of my minority afforded her ſcope for that purpoſe.

It was impoſſible for any boy to be treated with more kindneſs and conſiderate indulgence, than I was during the period of my adoleſcence. My mother loved me to the very utmoſt limits perhaps of human affection. I was her

her darling and her pride, her waking ſtudy, and her nightly dream. Yet I was not pampered into corporeal imbecillity, or ſuffered to ruſt in inactivity of mind. I was provided with the beſt maſters. I was excited, and ſucceſsfully excited, zealouſly to apply myſelf to the leſſons they taught. I became intimately acquainted with the Italian writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I was initiated in the ſtudy of the claſſics, to the cultivation of which the revival of letters at this time gave particular ardour. I was inſtructed in the principles of the fine arts. There was no ſpecies of accompliſhment at that time in vogue, that my mother was not anxious I ſhould make my own. The only ſcience I neglected, was the very ſcience which has ſince given riſe to the moſt extraordinary events of my life. But the object to which my attention was

principally called, was the purſuit of military exerciſes, and the cultivation of every thing that could add to the ſtrength, agility or grace of my body, and to the adventurouſneſs and enterprize of my mind. My mother loved my honour and my fame more than ſhe loved my perſon.

A circumſtance that tended perhaps more than any other to fix the yet fluctuating character of my youthful mind, was my being preſent as a ſpectator at the celebrated meeting between Francis the Firſt, and Henry the Eighth, king of England, in a field between Ardres and Guines. My mother refuſed to accompany me, being already arrived at an age in which curioſity and the love of feſtive ſcenes are uſually diminiſhed, and the expences incurred by all the nobility who attended upon this ſcene being incompatible with the economy to which ſhe rigidly adhered.

I was

I was therefore placed under the protection of the marquis de Villeroy, her brother, and, with two ſervants who attended me, formed a part of his ſuite.

I was at this time fifteen years of age. My contemplations had been familiar with ideas of magnificence and grandeur, but my life had been ſpent in the moſt ſequeſtered retirement. This contraſt had a particular effect upon my diſpoſition; it irritated to a very high degree my paſſion for ſplendour and diſtinction; I lived in the fairy fields of viſionary greatneſs, and was more than indifferent to the greater part of the objects around me. I pined for every thing the reverſe of my preſent condition; I cultivated the exerciſes in which I was engaged, only as they were calculated to prepare me for future atchievements.

By the incident I have mentioned, I was tranſported at once from a ſcene of modeſt obſcurity, to a ſcene of the moſt laviſh ſplendour that the world perhaps ever contemplated. I never remembered to have ſeen even Paris itſelf. The prevailing taſte of Europe has for ſome time led very much to coſtlineſs in dreſs. This taſte, in its preſent profuſion, I believe took its riſe in the field of the Vale of Ardres. The two kings were both in the vigour of their youth, and were ſaid to be the handſomeſt men of the age in which they lived. The beauty of Henry was ſturdy and muſcular; that of Francis more refined and elegant, without ſubtracting in any conſiderable degree from the firmneſs of his make. Henry was four years older than his brother monarch. The firſt of them might have been taken as a model to repreſent a youthful Hercules, and the laſt an Apollo.

The

The ſplendour of dreſs that was worn upon this occaſion, exceeds almoſt all credibility. Every perſon of diſtinction might be ſaid in a manner to carry an eſtate upon his ſhoulders; nor was the variety of garments inferior to the richneſs. Wolſey, a man whoſe magnificence of diſpoſition was only ſurpaſſed by the pride of his ſoul, was for the moſt part the director of the whole. He poſſeſſed the moſt abſolute aſcendancy over the mind of his maſter, at the ſame time that Francis artfully indulged his caprice, that he might claim from him in return a ſimilar indulgence in weightier matters.

The pomp of proceſſions, and the ceremony of opening this memorable feſtival, went firſt; a ſort of ſolemn and half-moving pageant, which the eye took in at leiſure, and took in till it was filled. This was ſucceeded by every thing that was rapid, animated

and

and intereſting: maſques and exhibitions of all kinds; and, which was ſtill more to me, and which my ſoul devoured with indeſcribable ardour, juſtings, tilts and tournaments without end. The beauty of the armour, the capariſons of the ſteeds, the mettle of the animals themſelves, and the ardour and grace of the combatants, ſurpaſſed every thing that my fancy had ever painted. Theſe ſcenes were acted in the midſt of a vaſt amphitheatre of ſpectators, where all that was noble and eminent of either country was aſſembled, the manlineſs of aſpiring youth, and the boundleſs varieties of female attraction. All were in their gayeſt attire; every eye was lighted up with complacency and joy. If Heraclitus, or any other moroſe philoſopher who has expatiated on the univerſal miſery of mankind, had entered the field of Ardres, he muſt have retracted his aſſertions,

aſſertions, or fled from the ſcene with confuſion. The kings were placed at either end of the liſts, ſurrounded with their courtiers. Every eye through this vaſt aſſembly was fixed upon the combatants; the body of every one preſent was inclined this way or that, in unconſcious ſympathy with the redoubted knights. From time to time, as the favourites of either party prevailed, the air was rent with ſhouts and acclamations.

What added to the faſcination of all that I have yet mentioned, was that now, for the firſt time in an equal degree perhaps for centuries, the ſtiffneſs of unwieldy form was laid aſide, and the heart of man expanded itſelf with generoſity and confidence. It burſt the fetters of ages; and, having burſt them, it ſeemed to revel in its new-found liberty. It is well known that, after a few days of idle precaution

tion and ſpecious impriſonment on both ſides, Francis one morning mounted his horſe, and appeared, without guards or any previous notice, before the tent of Henry. The example was contagious, and from this time all ceremony was laid aſide. The kings themſelves entered perſonally into the combats of their ſubjects. It was a delightful and a raviſhing ſpectacle, to witneſs all the freedom of the old Roman manners, almoſt of the old Roman Saturnalia, poliſhed and refined with all that was graceful and humane in the age of chivalry.

It may eaſily be imagined what an effect a ſcene like this was calculated to produce upon a youth of my age and my education. I recollected with anguiſh that the immaturity of my years precluded me from taking any active part in the ſpectacle. My appearance however was ſufficiently advantageous.

I was

I was preſented to Francis the Firſt. He did me the honour to queſtion me reſpecting my ſtudies; and, finding in me ſome knowledge of thoſe arts and that literature of which he was himſelf ſo zealous a favourer, he expreſſed to my uncle a great ſatisfaction with my figure and acquiſitions. I might from this time have been taken to court, and made one of the pages to this illuſtrious monarch. But the plan of my mother was different. She did not wiſh for the preſent that my eye ſhould be ſatiated with public ſcenes, or that the public ſhould grow too familiarly acquainted with my perſon. She rightly judged that my paſſion for the theatre of glory would grow more impetuous, by being withheld for ſome time from the gratifications for which it panted. She wiſhed that I ſhould preſent myſelf for the firſt time among the nobility of France an accompliſhed

compliſhed cavalier, and not ſuffer the diſadvantage of having expoſed in the eye of the world thoſe falſe ſteps and frailties, from which the inexperience of youth is never entirely free. Theſe motives being explained to the king, he was graciouſly pleaſed to ſanction them with his approbation. I accordingly returned to finiſh the courſe of my education at my paternal chateau upon the banks of the Garonne.

The ſtate of my mind during the three ſucceeding years, amply juſtified the ſagacity of my mother. I was more eager for improvement than I had ever yet been. I had before formed ſome conceptions of the career of honour, from the books I had read, and from the converſation of this excellent matron. But my reveries were impotent and little, compared with what I had now ſeen. Like the author of our holy religion, I had ſpent my forty days without

without food in the wilderneſs, when ſuddenly my eyes were opened, and I was preſented with all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them. The fairy ſcene continued for a moment, and then vaniſhed; leaving nothing behind it on all ſides but the ſame barrenneſs and gloom by which it had been preceded. I never ſhut my eyes without viewing in imagination the combats of knights and the train of ladies. I had been regarded with diſtinction by my ſovereign; and Francis the Firſt ſtood before my mind the abſtract and model of perfection and greatneſs. I congratulated myſelf upon being born in an age and country ſo favourable to the acquiſition of all that my ſoul deſired.

I was already eighteen years of age, when I experienced the firſt misfortune that ever befel me. It was the death of my mother. She felt the approach

approach of her diſſolution ſeveral weeks before it arrived, and held repeated converſations with me, reſpecting the feelings I ought to entertain, and the conduct it would become me to purſue, when ſhe ſhould be no more.

"My ſon," ſaid ſhe, "your character, and the promiſe of your early years, have conſtituted my only conſolation ſince the death of your excellent father. Our marriage was the reſult of a moſt ſincere and excluſive attachment, and never did man more deſerve to be loved than Reginald de St. Leon. When he died, the whole world would have been nothing to me but one vaſt blank, if he had not left behind him the repreſentative of his perſon, and the heir to his virtues. While I was buſied in your education, I ſeemed to be diſcharging the laſt duty to the memory of my huſband.

The

The occupation was ſacred to the honour of the dead, even before it became ſo peculiarly pleaſing to me upon its own account as I afterwards found it. I hope I have in ſome meaſure diſcharged the taſk in the manner in which my lord your father would have wiſhed it to have been diſcharged if he had lived. I am thankful to heaven that I have been ſpared ſo long for ſo dear and honourable a purpoſe.

" You muſt now, my ſon, ſtand by yourſelf, and be the arbitrator of your own actions. I could have wiſhed that this neceſſity might have been a little further deferred; but I truſt your education has not been of that ſort which is calculated to render a young man helpleſs and contemptible. You have been taught to know your rank in ſociety, and to reſpect yourſelf. You have been inſtructed in every thing that might moſt effectually forward

you

you in the career of glory. There is not a young cavalier among all the nobility of France more accompliſhed, or that promiſes to do greater honour to his name and his country. I ſhall not live to witneſs the performance of this promiſe, but the anticipation even now, pours a long ſtream of ſunſhine on my departing hour.

"Farewel, my ſon! You no longer ſtand in need of my maternal care. When I am gone, you will be compelled more vividly to feel that ſingleneſs and ſelf-dependence which are the ſource of all virtue. Be careful of yourſelf. Be careful that your career may be both ſpotleſs and illuſtrious. Hold your life as a thing of no account when it enters into competition with your fame. A true knight thinks no ſacrifice and ſuffering hard that honour demands. Be humane, gentle, generous and intrepid. Be prompt

to

to follow wherever your duty calls you. Remember your anceſtors, knights of the Holy Croſs. Remember your father. Follow your king, who is the mirror of valour; and be ever ready for the ſervice of the diſtreſſed. May providence be your guardian. May heaven ſhower down a thouſand bleſſings upon your innocence and the gallantry of your ſoul!"

The death of my mother was a ſevere blow to my heart. For ſome time all the viſions of greatneſs and renown which had hitherto been my choſen delight, appeared diſtaſteful to me. I hung over her inſenſible corpſe. When it had been committed to the earth, I repaired every day to the ſpot where it was depoſited, at the hour of duſk, when all viſible objects faded from the eye, when nature aſſumed her ſaddeſt tints, and the whole world ſeemed about to be wrapped in the darkneſs

darkneſs of the tomb. The dew of night drizzled unheeded on my head; and I did not turn again towards the turrets of the chateau, till the hour of midnight had already ſounded through the ſtilneſs of the ſcene.

Time is the healer of almoſt every grief, particularly in the ſprightly ſeaſon of early youth. In no long period I changed the oppreſſion of inactive ſorrow, for the affectionate and pious recollection of my mother's laſt inſtructions. I had been too deeply imbued with ſentiments of glory, for it to be poſſible, when the firſt exceſs of grief was over, that I ſhould remain in indolence. The tender remembrance of my mother itſelf, in no long time, furniſhed a new ſtimulus to my ambition. I forgot the melancholy ſpectacle of the laſt ſtruggles of her expiring life; I even became accuſtomed no longer to hear her voice, no

longer

longer to expect her presence, when I returned to the chateau from a short excursion. Her last advice was now all that survived of the author of my existence.

CHAP. II.

I WAS in this ſtate of mind, when, early one morning in the beginning of ſummer, ſoon after I roſe, I was ſtartled by the ſound of trumpets in the plain near the chateau. The bugle at the gate was preſently ſounded; the drawbridge was let down; and the marquis de Villeroy entered the court-yard, accompanied by about thirty knights in complete armour. I ſaluted him with reſpect, and the tenderneſs excited by recent grief. He took me by the hand, after a ſhort repaſt in the hall, and led me to my cloſet.

"My ſon," ſaid he, "it is time to throw off the effeminacy of ſorrow, and to prove yourſelf a true ſoldier of the ſtandard of France."

"I truſt,

"I truſt, my lord," replied I, with modeſt earneſtneſs, "that you well know, there is nothing after which my heart ſo ardently aſpires. There is nothing that I know worth living for, but honour. Show me the path that leads to it, or rather ſhow me the occaſion that affords ſcope for the love of honour to diſplay itſelf, and you ſhall then ſee whether I am backward to embrace it. I have a paſſion pent up within me, that feeds upon my vitals. It diſdains ſpeech; it burns for ſomething more unambiguous and ſubſtantial."

"It is well," rejoined my uncle. "I expected to find you thus. Your reply to my admonition is worthy of the blood of your anceſtors, and of the maternal inſtructions of my ſiſter. And, were you as dull as the very ſtones you tread on, what I have to

tell you might even then rouſe you into animation and ardour."

After this ſhort preface my uncle proceeded to relate a tale, every word of which inflamed my ſpirits, and raiſed all my paſſions in arms. I had heard ſomething imperfectly of the ſtate of my country; but my mother carefully kept me in ignorance, that my ambition might not be excited too ſoon, and that, when excited, it might be with the fulleſt effect. While I impatiently longed for an occaſion of glory, I was far from apprehending, what I now found to be true, that the occaſion which at this period preſented itſelf, was ſuch, that all the licence of fiction could ſcarcely have improved it.

The marquis de Villeroy deſcribed to me the league now ſubſiſting againſt France. He revived in my memory by terms of the moſt fervent loyalty, the

the accompliſhments and talents of my royal maſter. He ſpoke with averſion of the phlegmatic and crafty diſpoſition of his imperial rival *; and, with the language of glowing indignation, inveighed againſt the ficklenefs of the capricious Henry †. He deſcribed the train of diſaſters which had at length induced the king to take the field in perſon. He contraſted, with great effect, the ſtory of the gallant chevalier Bayard, *the knight without fear and without reproach*, whoſe blood was ſtill freſh in the plains of the Milaneſe; with that of the conſtable of Bourbon, the ſtain of chivalry, whom inglorious reſentment and ungoverned ambition had urged to join the enemies of his country, in neglect of his loyalty and his oath. He ſtimulated me by the example of the one, and the infamy

* Charles V. † Henry VIII.

of the other; and aſſured me that there never was an opportunity more favourable for acquiring immortal renown.

I wanted no prompter in a paſſion of this ſort; and immediately ſet about collecting the whole force of my clients and retainers. I ſhook off the inglorious ſoftneſs of my melancholy, and was all activity and animation. The leſſons of my youth were now called into play. I judged it neceſſary to invite the aſſiſtance of ſome perſon of experience to aſſiſt me in marſhalling my men; but I did much of what was to be done myſelf, and I did it well. It was my firſt employment in the morning; and the laſt that was witneſſed by the ſetting ſun. My excellent mother had left my revenues in the beſt order, and I ſpared no expence in the gratification of my favourite paſſion.

However

However eager I felt myſelf to take the field, the deſire to appear in a manner worthy of a count de St. Leon reſtrained me; and I did not join the royal army till the Imperialiſts, having broken up the ſiege of Marſeilles, and retreated with precipitation into Italy, the king had already croſſed the Alps, entered the Milaneſe, and gained unconteſted poſſeſſion of the capital.

From Milan Francis proceeded to Pavia. Glory was the idol of his heart; and he was the more powerfully excited to the attack of that place, becauſe it was the ſtrongeſt and beſt fortified poſt in the whole duchy. The more he diſplayed of military proweſs, the more firmly he believed he ſhould fix himſelf in his newly acquired dominions; the inhabitants would ſubmit to him the more willingly, and the enemy be leſs encouraged to enter into a freſh contention

for what he had acquired. Such at leaſt were the motives that he aſſigned for his proceedings: in reality perhaps he was principally induced by the brilliancy which he conceived would attend on the undertaking.

It was a few weeks after the opening of the ſiege that I preſented myſelf to my royal maſter. He received me with thoſe winning and impreſſive manners by which he was ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed. He recollected immediately all that had paſſed at our interview in the vale of Ardres, and warmly expreſſed the obligations which France had at various times owed to my anceſtors. He ſpoke with earneſt reſpect of the virtues and wiſdom of my mother, and commended the reſolution by which ſhe had in former inſtances held me back from the public theatre. "Young gentleman," ſaid the king, "I doubt not the gallantry of your ſpirit;

ſpirit; I ſee the impatience of a martial temper written in your face; I expect you to act in a manner worthy of your illuſtrious race, and of the inſtructions of a woman who deſerved to be herſelf a pattern to all the matrons of France. Fear not that I ſhall ſuffer your accompliſhments to ruſt in obſcurity. I ſhall employ you. I ſhall aſſign you the poſt of danger and of renown. Fill it nobly; and from that hour I ſhall rank you in the catalogue of my choſen friends."

The ſiege of Pavia proved indeed to be a tranſaction, in the courſe of which military honour might well be acquired. It was defended by a ſmall, but veteran garriſon, and by one of the ableſt captains that Europe at that time poſſeſſed *. He interrupted the approaches of the beſiegers by frequent and furious ſallies. In vain, by the

* Antonio de Leyva.

aid of our excellent artillery, did we make wide and repeated breaches in the fortifications. No ſooner did we attempt to enter by the paſſage we had opened, than we found ourſelves encountered by a body compoſed of the choiceſt and braveſt ſoldiers of the garriſon. The governor of the city, who, though grey-headed and advanced in years, was profuſe of every youthful exertion, was ordinarily at the head of this body. If we deferred our attack, or, not having ſucceeded in it, propoſed to commence it anew with the dawn of the following day, we were ſure to find a new wall ſprung up in the room of the other, as if by enchantment. Frequently the governor anticipated the ſucceſs of our batteries, and the old fortification was no ſooner demoliſhed, than we beheld to our aſtoniſhment and mortification a new wall, which his

his prudence and ſkill had erected at a ſmall interval within the line of the former.

One of theſe attacks took place on the ſecond day after my arrival at the camp of our ſovereign. Every thing that I ſaw was new to me, and inflamed me with ardour. The noiſe of the cannon, which had preceded the attack, and which was now huſhed; the inſpiring ſounds of martial muſic which ſucceeded that noiſe; the ſtandards floating in the air; the firm and equal tread of the battalion that advanced; the armour of the knights; the rugged, reſolute and intrepid countenances of the infantry; all ſwelled my ſoul with tranſport hitherto unexperienced. I had beheld the ſmoke of the artillery, in the midſt of which every thing was loſt and confounded; I had waited in awful ſuſpence till the obſcurity ſhould be diſſipated; I ſaw with pleaſure and

ſurpriſe the ruin of the wall, and the wideneſs of the breach. All that had been recorded of the military feats of Chriſtian valour ſeemed then to ſtand crouded in my buſy brain; the generoſity, the condeſcenſion, the kindneſs with which the king had addreſſed me the day before, urged me to treble exertion. I was in the foremoſt rank. We ſurmounted the ditch. We were reſiſted by a choſen body of Spaniards. The contention was obſtinate; brave men, generous and enterpriſing ſpirits, fell on the one ſide and the other. I ſeized the cloth of a ſtandard, as, in the playing of the wind, it was brought near to my hand. Between me and the Spaniard that held it there enſued an obſtinate ſtruggle. I watched my opportunity, and with my ſword ſevered the flag from its ſtaff. At this moment the trumpets of the king ſounded a retreat. I had received two ſevere wounds,

wounds, one in the ſhoulder and the other in the thigh, in the conteſt. I felt myſelf faint with the loſs of blood. A French officer of a rude appearance and gigantic ſtature, accoſting me with the appellation of boy, commanded me to ſurrender the ſtandard to him. I refuſed; and, to convince him I was in earneſt, proceeded to wrap it round my body, and faſtened it under my arm. Soon after I became inſenſible, and in this ſituation was accidentally found by my uncle and his companions, who immediately took me and my prize under their care. As ſoon as I was a little recovered of my wounds, the king ſeized an opportunity, after having beſtowed loud commendations upon my gallantry, of conferring the honours of knighthood upon me in the face of the whole army.

While our tents were pitched under the walls of Pavia, I was continually extending

extending the circle of my acquaintance among the young gentry of France, who, like myſelf, had attended their ſovereign in this memorable expedition. I had ſome enemies, made ſuch by the diſtinctions I obtained during the ſiege. But they were few; the greater part courted me the more, the more I ſhowed myſelf worthy of their attachment. Envy is not a paſſion that finds eaſy root in a Frenchman's boſom. I was one of the youngeſt of thoſe who attended on the ſiege; but my brothers in arms were generous rivals, who in the field obſtinately ſtrove with me for ſuperior glory, but over the convivial board forgot their mutual competitions, and opened their hearts to benevolence and friendſhip. "Let us not," was a ſentiment I heard often repeated, "forget the object that led us from our pleaſant homes to pour from the heights of the Alps upon the fields of Italy. It is to humble the imperious

imperious Spaniard, to puniſh the diſ-loyal Bourbon, to vindicate the honour of our beloved and illuſtrious monarch. Thoſe walls cover the enemy; yonder mountains ſerve to hide them from our aſſault; let no Frenchman miſtake him who marches under the ſame ſtandard for an adverſary."

The trenches had not been opened before Pavia, till about the beginning of November. The winter overtook us, and the ſiege was yet in progreſs; with ſome apparent advantage indeed to our ſide of the queſtion, but by no means promiſing an inſtant concluſion. The ſeaſon ſet in with unuſual ſeverity; and both officer and ſoldier were glad, as much as poſſible, to fence out its rigour by the indulgences of the genial board. My finances, as I have ſaid, were at the commencement of the expedition in excellent order; I had brought with me a conſiderable ſum;

and

and it was not ſpared upon the preſent occaſion.

There were however other things to be attended to, beſide the demands of conviviality. The king became impatient of the delays of the ſiege. The garriſon and the inhabitants were reduced to great extremities; but the governor diſcovered no ſymptoms of a purpoſe to ſurrender. In the mean time intelligence was brought that Bourbon was making the moſt extraordinary exertions in Germany, and promiſed to bring to the enemy a reinforcement of twelve thouſand men from that country, while the Imperial generals, by mortgaging their revenues, and pawning their jewels, and ſtill more by their eloquence and influence with thoſe under their command, were able to keep together the remains of a diſheartened and defeated army in expectation of his arrival.

There

There was ſome danger therefore, if the ſiege were not ſpeedily terminated, that the king might ultimately be obliged to raiſe it with ignominy, or to fight the enemy under every diſadvantage. Francis however was not to be deterred from his undertaking. He ſwore a ſolemn oath, that Pavia ſhould be his, or he would periſh in the attempt.

Thus circumſtanced, he conceived a very extraordinary project. Pavia is defended on one ſide by the Teſino, the ſcene of the firſt of the four famous battles by which Hannibal ſignaliſed his invaſion of Italy. The king believed that if this river could by the labour of his army be diverted from its courſe, the town muſt inſtantly fall into his hands. He was encouraged to the undertaking, by recollecting a ſtratagem of a ſimilar nature by which Cyrus formerly made himſelf maſter of

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the city of Babylon. It was a thought highly flattering to the grandeur of his ſoul, to imagine that poſterity would in this inſtance inſtitute a parallel between him and Cyrus the Great.

The plan for diverting the courſe of the Teſino produced a new and extraordinary ſcene. It was, as may well be believed, a work of uncommon labour. A new channel was to be ſcooped out and deepened; and, while the ſtream was turned into this channel, piles were to be ſunk, and an immenſe mound of earth created, as an effectual impediment to the waters reſuming their former courſe. This was a heavy burthen to the ſoldier, in addition to the diſadvantage of being encamped during the courſe of a winter, remarkably ſevere for the climate in which we fought. By any other army the taſk would have been performed with cloudineſs and diſcontent, if not complained

plained of with repining and murmurs. But here the gaiety of the French character diſplayed itſelf. The nobility of France, who attended their ſovereign in great numbers, accompanied the infantry in their labour. We laid aſide the indulgence of the marquée, of tapeſtry and carpets; we threw off our upper garments; and each of us ſeized a ſpade, a barrow of earth, or a mattock. We put our hands to the engines, and refuſed no effort under pretence that it was ſordid or ſevere. While the trees were leafleſs, and nature appeared bound up in froſt, ſweat ran down our faces and bedewed our limbs. The army were encouraged by our example. An employment which under other circumſtances would have been regarded as rigid, was thus made a ſource of new hilarity and amuſement. It was a memorable ſight to behold the venerable and grey-

headed

headed leaders of the French army endeavouring to exert the ſtrength and activity of their early years. To me, who had but lately arrived at the ſtature of manhood, and who was accuſtomed to all the exerciſes which give ſtrength and vigour to the frame, this new employment was in no degree burthenſome. I felt in it the ſatisfaction that a ſwift man experiences when he enters the liſts of the race; I congratulated myſelf upon the nature of my education; if it be a ſin to covet honour, that guilt was mine; and, ſo great was my appetite for it, that I was inexpreſſibly rejoiced to obſerve the various ways in which it might be gratified.

Strange as it may ſeem, this ſcene of a winter-camp, in the midſt of blood and ſweat, ſurrounded with dangers, and called on for unparalleled exertions, appears to me through the viſto

of

of years that is now interpoſed between, to have been one of the happieſt of my life. The gay labours and ſurpriſes of the day, were ſucceeded by a convivial evening in which we did not the leſs open our hearts, though frequently liable to be interrupted in our midnight revels by the inexhauſtible activity and ſtratagems of the enemy. In this various and ever-ſhifting ſcene, I forgot the diſaſters that occurred, and the blood that flowed around me. All ſenſe of a large and impartial morality was, for the time at leaſt, deadened in my breaſt. I was ever upon the alert. The diverſity of events neither ſuffered my ſpirits to flag, not reflection to awake. It is only upon ſuch occaſions, or occaſions like theſe, that a man is able fully to feel what life is, and to revel in its exuberance. Above all, I was delighted with the ſociety and friendſhip of my brother-officers. They honoured

honoured me; they loved me. I ſeemed to feel what ſympathy was; and to have conſcious pleaſure in making one in a race of beings like myſelf. Such were my ſenſations.

It muſt not however be imagined that all about me felt in theſe reſpects as I did. I was deeply indebted in this particular to my youth and my fortune. The old endeavoured to brace themſelves in vain; they ſunk under the continual preſſure. The poor ſoldier from the ranks laboured inceſſantly, and I laboured as much as he; but he had little opportunity to recruit his vigour and renovate his ſtrength. There was yet another claſs of perſons in the camp, whoſe gaiety was much leſs uninterrupted than mine. Theſe were the king and the generals who commanded under him. They could not be entirely devoid of thought and conſideration. They ſuffered much anxiety

anxiety from the length of the ſiege; and felt that every period of delay increaſed the doubtfulneſs of the event.

Antonio de Leyva, governor of the city, neceſſarily felt himſelf alarmed at the extraordinary project in which we were engaged, and made every exertion to prevent it. One evening the king ſent for me to his tent, and told me in confidence that the enemy intended that very night to make three ſeveral attacks upon our mound, one on each ſide of the ſtream, and one by means of boats in the centre. Two of theſe, he ſaid, were merely intended as feints; the weſt bank of the Teſino was the point againſt which their principal exertions would be directed. On that ſide he was reſolved to command in perſon; the boats with which he propoſed to reſiſt their flota he confided to one of the moſt famous and valuable officers of his army; the

detachment

detachment on the eaſt bank he purpoſed to intruſt to my uncle and myſelf. He obſerved that the detachment he could ſpare for that purpoſe, after having formed the other two bodies, and reſerved a ſufficient number for the defence of the camp and the works, would be ſmall; and he warned me to the exertion of a particular vigilance. It would be doubly unfortunate, if a body, the attack upon which was to be merely a feigned one, ſhould nevertheleſs be routed. Go, added he, fulfil my expectations; deport yourſelf anſwerably to the merit of your firſt atchievement; and depend upon it that you will prove hereafter one of the moſt eminent ſupporters of the martial glory of France.

The marquis de Villeroy divided our little force into two bodies: with the larger he lay in wait for the enemy near the ſcene of the expected attack; the

the ſmaller he confided to my direction, and placed ſo that we might be able to fall upon the rear of the garriſon-troops as ſoon as they ſhould be fully engaged with our comrades. In the ſituation aſſigned me, I took advantage of the ſkirts of a wood, which enabled me to approach very near to the expected route of our aſſailants without being perceived by them. The night was extremely dark, yet the vicinity of my poſition was ſuch that I could count the numbers of the adverſary as they paſſed along before my hiding place. I was alarmed to find that they amounted to at leaſt the triple of what we had been taught to expect. They were no ſooner paſt, than I diſpatched to the king a young knight, my particular friend, who happened to be with me, to urge the neceſſity of a reinforcement. At the ſame time I ſent a meſſenger to my uncle, by a cir-

cuitous route, to inform him of what I had obſerved, and the ſtep I had taken, and to intreat him to defer the attack as long as conſiſtently with propriety it ſhould be poſſible. The enemy however had no ſooner arrived at the place of their deſtination, than the troops of the marquis, no longer capable of reſtraint, ruſhed to engage them. The Spaniards were at firſt ſurpriſed, but a ſhort time led them to ſuſpect the weakneſs of their aſſailants, nor was the aſſiſtance I brought to my uncle ſufficient to turn the fortune of the fight. We loſt many of our men; the reſt apparently gave ground; and it was a vain attempt amidſt the darkneſs of the night, to endeavour to reſtore order and rally them to the aſſault. We were already almoſt completely overpowered, when the ſuccours we expected reached us. They were however unable to diſtinguiſh friend

from enemy. A ſtorm of mingled rain and ſnow had come on, which benumbed our limbs, drove fiercely in our faces, and rendered every object alike viewleſs. The carnage which in this ſituation took place, was truly dreadful. Our blows were ſtruck at random. A Frenchman was not leſs dreadful than a Spaniard. When the battle ceaſed, ſcarcely one of the enemy was left alive; but we obſerved with aſtoniſhment and horror the number of the beſiegers who had probably, in the midſt of the confuſion, been cut to pieces by their own countrymen.

I am now arrived at the period which put an end to the feſtivity and jocundneſs of the campaign. All after this was one continued ſeries of diſaſter. About the cloſe of January, our work, though not wholly interrupted, was conſiderably retarded by a ſucceſ-

ſion of heavy rains. This was injurious to us in many ways; our project, which was executed in the midſt of waters, rendered additional damp a matter of ſerious conſideration. We were alſo ſeized with an apprehenſion of ſtill greater magnitude, which was ſpeedily realiſed. The ſnows being at length completely diſſolved, and the quantity of water continually increaſing, we perceived one afternoon ſtrong ſymptoms that our mound, the principal ſubject of our labour and ſource of our hope, was giving way in various places. The next morning at day-break, it ruſhed down every where at once with wonderful violence and noiſe. It is difficult to deſcribe the ſenſation of anguiſh which was inſtantly and univerſally diffuſed. The labour of many weeks was overthrown in a moment. As we had proceeded in our work, we every day ſaw ourſelves near-

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er the object to which we aſpired. At this time our project was almoſt completed, and Pavia was in imagination already in our hands, to gain poſſeſſion of which had coſt us ſuch unremitted exertions, the diſplay of ſo much gallantry, and the loſs of ſo many ſoldiers. We were confounded at the cataſtrophe we ſaw. We gazed at each other, each in want of encouragement, and every one unable to afford it.

Still however we were not deſtitute of advantages. The garriſon began to be in want both of ammunition and proviſions. They were in a general ſtate of diſcontent, almoſt of mutiny, which ſcarcely all the addreſs and authority of the governor were able to ſuppreſs. If the town continued longer unrelieved, it was ſure to fall into our hands. But even this our laſt hope was conſiderably diminiſhed by the intelligence we received the very

day after the deſtruction of our mound, that the imperial army, after having received large reinforcements, was approaching in conſiderable force. The king had ſome time before, in the height of his confidence, and elation of his heart, ſent off a detachment of ſix thouſand men to invade the kingdom of Naples; for upon that, as well as the Milaneſe, he had inherited pretenſions from his immediate predeceſſors.

But, though the enemy was ſuperior in numbers, and a part perhaps of their forces better diſciplined than ours, they laboured under ſeveral diſadvantages to which we were not expoſed. The emperor, though his dominions were more extenſive, did not derive from them a revenue equal to that of Francis. As he did not take the field in perſon, the war appeared to his ſubjects only a common war,

proceeding

proceeding upon the ordinary motives of war. But my countrymen were led by their ſovereign, were freſh from the recent inſolence of an invaſion of their own territory, and fought at once for perſonal glory and their country's honour. The king who commanded them, ſeemed expreſsly formed to obtain their attachment and affection. His nobles became enthuſiaſtic by the example of his enthuſiaſm, and willingly diſburſed their revenues to give proſperity and eclat to the campaign.

The firſt queſtion that aroſe upon the approach of the enemy, was, whether we ſhould break up the ſiege, and attend in ſome ſtrong poſt the ſlow, but ſure, effect of their want of money, and the conſequent diſperſion of their troops, or wait their attack in our preſent poſture. The former advice was ſafe; but to the gallant ſpirit of Francis it appeared ignominious. He was

upon all occaſions the partiſan of rapid meaſures and deciſive proceedings; and his temper, with the exception of a few wary and deliberate counſellors, accorded with that of our whole army. For ſome days we congratulated ourſelves upon the wiſdom of our choice; we preſented to the enemy ſo formidable an appearance, that, notwithſtanding the cogent motives he had to proceed, he heſitated long before he ventured to attack us. At length however the day came, that was pregnant with ſo momentous expectation.

If through the whole limits of our camp there was not a man that did not feel himſelf rouſed upon this glorious occaſion, to me it was eſpecially intereſting. The ſcene accorded with the whole purpoſe of my education, and novelty made it impreſſive. I lived only in the preſent moment. I

had

had not a thought, a wiſh, a ſtraggling imagination, that wandered beyond the circuit of the day. My ſoul was filled; at one minute wild with expectation, and at another awed into ſolemnity. There is ſomething indeſcribably delicious in this concentration of the mind. It raiſes a man above himſelf; and makes him feel a certain nobleneſs and elevation of character, of the poſſeſſion of which he was to that hour unconſcious. Fear and pain were ideas that could find no harbour in my boſom; I regarded this as the moſt memorable of days, and myſelf as the moſt fortunate of mortals. Far indeed was I from anticipating the diſgraceful event in which this elation of heart ſpeedily terminated.

The ſun roſe bright in a cloudleſs ſky. The cold of the ſeaſon was ſuch, as only to give new lightneſs and elaſticity to the muſcles and animal ſpirits.

I ſaw few of thoſe objects of nature, which in this delightful climate give ſo ſacred a pleaſure to the human ſoul. But in my preſent temper there was no object of ſight ſo raviſhing, as the firm and equal ſteps of the martial bands, the impatience of the war-horſe, and the diſplay of military ſtandards; nor any muſic ſo enchanting, as the ſhrilneſs of the pipe, the clangor of the trumpet, the neighing of ſteeds, and the roaring of cannon. It is thus that man diſguiſes to himſelf the real nature of his occupation; and clothes that which is of all things moſt nefarious or moſt to be lamented, with the ſemblance of jubilee and feſtival.

The Imperialiſts were at firſt unable to withſtand the efforts of French valour. They gave way on every ſide; we purſued our advantage with impetuoſity. To the ſlaughter of whole ranks

ranks mowed down with tremendous celerity, to the agonies of the dying. I was blind; their groans had no effect on my organ, for my ſoul was occupied in another direction. My horſe's heels ſpurned their mangled limbs, and were red with their blood. I fought not merely with valour, but with fury; I animated thoſe around me by my example and my acclamations. It may ſeem contrary to delicacy for me to ſpeak with this freedom of my own praiſes; but I am at my preſent writing totally changed and removed from what I was, and I write with the freedom of a general hiſtorian. It is this ſimplicity and ingenuouſneſs that ſhall pervade the whole of my narrative.

The fortune of the day ſpeedily changed. The cowardice and deſertion of our Swiſs allies, gave the firſt ſignal of adverſity. The gallant commander of the garriſon of Pavia, ſallied

out in the midſt of the fight, and ſuddenly attacked us in the rear. A ſtratagem of the imperial general effected the route of our cavalry. The whole face of the field was utterly reverſed.

It would be in vain for me to attempt to deſcribe even the ſmall part that I beheld of the calamity and ſlaughter of the French army. At this diſtance of time, the recollection of it opens afreſh the almoſt obliterated wounds of my heart. I ſaw my friends cut down, and periſh on every ſide. Thoſe who, together with myſelf, had marched out in the morning, ſwelled with exultation and hope, now lay weltering in their blood. Their hopes, their thoughts, their exiſtence, were brought to a fatal termination. The common ſoldiers were hewed and cut to pieces by hundreds without note and obſervation. Many of the firſt nobility of France, made deſperate by the change

change of the battle, ruſhed into the thickeſt of the foe, and became ſo many voluntary ſacrifices, chuſing rather to periſh, than to turn their backs with diſhonour.

In the battle I had two horſes killed under me. The firſt of them ſuffered a ſort of gradual deſtruction. He had already received one wound in the noſtrils, and another in the neck, when a third ſhot carried away two of his feet, and laid him proſtrate on the earth. Peter, my faithful attendant, obſerved what was paſſing, and immediately brought me a freſh charger; but I had not long mounted him, when he received a wound which killed him on the ſpot. I was myſelf hurt in ſeveral places, and at length the ſtroke of a ſabre brought me to the ground. Here I remained for a long time inſenſible. When I recovered, and looked around me, I found myſelf in entire

ſolitude,

ſolitude, and could at preſent perceive no trace either of the enemy or of my own people. Soon however I recollected what had paſſed, and was but too well aſſured of the defeat my countrymen had ſuſtained. Weak and battered as I was, I attempted to retire to a place of greater ſecurity. I had ſcarcely changed my ground, before I ſaw a trooper of the enemy ruſhing towards me with the intention to take away my life. Fortunately I obſerved a tree at hand, to the ſhelter of which I haſtened; and, partly by moving the branches to and fro, and partly by ſhifting my poſition, I baffled my adverſary, till he became weary of the attempt. A moment after, I ſaw one of my moſt intimate and familiar companions killed before my eyes. It was not long however before a party of fugitive French came up to the ſpot where I ſtood, and I, like the reſt, was

hurried

hurried from the field. My uncle periſhed in the battle.

It is wonderful how men can harden their hearts againſt ſuch ſcenes as I then witneſſed. It is wonderful how they can be brought to co-operate in ſuch demoniac fury, and more than demoniac miſchief, barbarity and murder. But they are brought to it; and enter, not from a deplorable neceſſity, but as to a feſtival, in which each man is eager to occupy his place, and ſhare the amuſements. It ſeemed to me at that time, as it ſeems to me now, that it ſhould be enough for a man to contemplate ſuch a field as I ſaw at Pavia, to induce him to abjure the trade of violence for ever, and to commit his ſword once more to the bowels of the earth, from which it was torn for ſo nefarious a purpoſe.

Theſe ſenſations, though now finally eſtabliſhed in my mind, were at the time

time of which I am writing but of fleeting duration. The force of education and the firſt bent of my mind, were too ſtrong. The horror which overwhelmed me in the firſt moments of this great national defeat ſubſided; and the military paſſion returned upon me in its original ardour. My convictions, and the moral integrity of my ſoul, were temporary; and I became myſelf a monument of that inconſtancy and that wonder, to which I have juſt alluded.

Various circumſtances however prevented this paſſion from its direct operation. The character of France was altered by the battle of Pavia, though mine remained the ſame. It was in the fulleſt degree deciſive of the fortune of the war. Milan, and every other place in the dutchy, opened their gates to the conqueror: and, in a fortnight, not a Frenchman was left in the fields of Italy.

Italy. Of the whole army only a ſmall body effected an orderly retreat, under the command of the duke of Alenſon. Many perſons of the higheſt diſtinction periſhed in the battle: many were made priſoners by the enemy. France by this event found the liſt of her nobleſſe conſiderably reduced in numbers; add to which, thoſe whoſe loſs ſhe ſuſtained, were almoſt all of them taken from among the moſt diſtinguiſhed and meritorious in the catalogue.

But what conſtituted the principal feature in this memorable event, was that the king himſelf was found in the number of the priſoners; nor was he releaſed by his ungenerous competitor till after more than a twelvemonth's confinement. During this period Francis taſted of the dregs of adverſity. Inclined in the firſt inſtance to judge of his rival by himſelf, he expected a liberal treatment. In this he was

deeply

deeply diſappointed. After a detention of many months in the Milaneſe, the ſcene of his former ſucceſſes, he was transferred to Madrid. He was perſonally neglected by the emperor, while his diſloyal ſubject* was treated with ſingular diſtinction. The moſt rigorous terms were propoſed to him. All this had the effect, in one inſtance, of ſinking him into a diſeaſe of languor and dejection which he was not expected to ſurvive; and, in another, of inducing him to execute an inſtrument by which he abdicated the crown, and declared his reſolution of remaining a priſoner for life. His confinement was at length terminated by his ſolemnly engaging to compulſory articles, which he was determined to break as ſoon as he found himſelf at liberty; an alternative peculiarly grating to the

* The conſtable of Bourbon.

liberality

liberality of his ſpirit. This reverſe of fortune materially changed his character. The fine ſpirit of his ambition was from this time evaporated; and, while he ſtill retained the indefeaſable qualities of his ſoul, and was gallant, kind-hearted and generous, he bartered, as far as was compatible with his diſpoſition, the enterprifing and audacious temper he had previouſly manifeſted, for the wary and phlegmatic ſyſtem of his more fortunate competitor. His genius cowered before that of Charles; and the defeat of Pavia may perhaps be conſidered as having given a deadly wound to the reign of chivalry, and a ſecure foundation to that of craft, diſſimulation, corruption and commerce.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE liſts of military ambition then being cloſed, if not permanently, at leaſt for a time, my mind took a new bias; and, without diſmiſſing its moſt cheriſhed and darling paſſion, purſued a path in the preſent emergency, to which the accidents of my youth had alſo guided me. If my mother had ſurvived, ſhe would probably, either not have conſented to my ſerving at the ſiege of Pavia, or at leaſt would have recalled me to the obſcurity of my paternal chateau as ſoon as the campaign was at an end. I had not fully completed the twentieth year of my age, at the period of the memorable battle in which my ſovereign was made priſoner. I was left

left without adviſer or guide; even the marquis de Villeroy, my mother's brother, of whatever conſequence his admonitions to me might have proved, was taken from me in this fatal engagement. The king himſelf perhaps, had it not been for the dreadful calamities in which he was now involved, might have condeſcended to intereſt himſelf in ſome degree in my welfare. By the courſe of events, I was left, yet a minor, and with an ample revenue at my diſpoſition, to be wholly guided by the ſuggeſtions of my own mind.

In the portion of his reign already elapſed, the ſplendid and intereſting qualities of Francis had given a new ſpring to the ſentiments of the nation. He was the moſt accompliſhed and amiable prince of the time in which he lived. There was but one of all the ſovereigns of Chriſtendom that could

cope

cope with him in power, the emperor Charles; and, as Charles's peculiarities were of a ſort that Frenchmen were accuſtomed to regard with averſion and contempt, ſo there had not been a doubt among my compatriots, of the ſide upon which the ſuperiority would ultimately reſt. By the events of the day of Pavia they were confounded and overwhelmed. They did not deſpair of their country; they ſoon felt, and felt to its utmoſt extent, the rank which France held among the European ſtates. But the chain of their ideas was interrupted; they could not but be conſcious that the fortune of the kingdom had received a grievous check. The illuſtrious career which they had in fancy already traverſed, was now poſtponed to a diſtant period.

The conſequences which flow from a ſuppreſſed ambition may eaſily be imagined. The nobility of France exchanged

changed the activity of the field for the indulgences of the table: that concentrated ſpirit which had ſought to expand itſelf upon the wideſt field, now found vent in the exhibition of individual expence: and, above all, the fordid and inglorious paſſion for gaming, a vice eminently characteriſtic of the age in which I have lived, now eſpecially gained ſtrength, and drew multitudes into its deſtructive vortex. It was perhaps impoſſible for a young man to have entered the theatre of the world under leſs favourable auſpices.

In what I have already written, I felt myſelf prompted to enlarge with complacency upon the ſentiments and ſcenes of my youth; and I have yielded to the ſuggeſtion. The ſame internal admonition makes me ſhrink from entering with minuteneſs into the detail of my ruin. I recollect my infatuation with abhorrence; I fly from the

memory

memory with ſenſations inexpreſſibly painful; I regard it as a cloud that overſhadowed and blackened for ever the fair proſpects of my earlier years.

I ſhall not enumerate all my youthful companions, or all my youthful follies. I committed a miſtake obvious enough, at this immature period of my exiſtence, when I miſtook profuſion and extravagance for ſplendour and dignity; and the prudent economy which my mother had practiſed, ſerved in the preſent inſtance as the pandar to my vices. The whole tendency of my education had been to inſpire me with a proud and reſtleſs deſire of diſtinction; and I was not content to play a ſecond part in the career of my vices, as I ſhould not have been content to play a ſecond part in the genuine theatre of honour and fame. In all that was thoughtleſsly ſpirited and gaily profligate I led the way to my compeers,

peers, and was conſtantly held up by them as an example. By this conduct I incurred the cenſure of the rigorous and the old; but the voice of cenſure reached me much ſeldomer than that of adulation. My perſon and demeanour were the topics of general applauſe. I was tall and well-proportioned; my perſon was ſlender and agile, but with an appearance of the fulleſt health; my countenance was open, commanding and animated. My rank and ſituation in the world gave me confidence; the fire and impetuoſity of my temper rendered my geſtures eaſy, rapid, expreſſive and graceful. The conſequence of all this was to confirm me in a plan of life which I early laid down to myſelf, and from which I never in any inſtance deviated. I put aſide thoſe rules as ſplenetic and hypercritical, which confeſſors preach, and with which the preceptors of young

men are accuſtomed to weary and alienate the minds of their pupils. The charge of being diſorderly and unthinking I deſpiſed; that of imprudence, even when meant for blame, ſounded in my ear like the voice of encomium. But, accuſtomed from education to ſentiments of honour, and from habit to the language of eulogy, it is difficult for any man to be more firmly bent than I was to incur no breath of diſhonour, or to draw the line more peremptorily, between the follies of youth, and the aberrations of a groſs and unprincipled ſpirit.

It may be alleged indeed, and with conſiderable juſtice, that the habit of gaming is an exception to this ſtatement. It was with great heſitation and reluctance that I entered into this habit. I ſaw it as it was, and as every ingenuous and undebauched mind muſt ſee it, baſe and ſordid. The poſſeſ-

ſion

ſion of ſome degree of wealth I regarded indeed as indiſpenſible to a man who would fill a lofty and reſpectable character in the world, a character that, by uniting the advantages of exterior appearance with the actions of a hero, ſhould extort the homage of his ſpecies. But, in the picture I drew of this man in my mind, I conſidered wealth as an accident, the attendant on his birth, to be diſpenſed with dignity, not to be adverted to with minuteneſs of attention. Deep play is certainly ſufficiently inconſiſtent with this character. The direct purpoſe of the gameſter is to transfer money from the pocket of his neighbour into his own. He rouſes his ſleepy and wearied attention by the moſt ſordid of all motives. The fear of loſing pierces his heart with anguiſh; and to gain, to obtain an advantage for himſelf, which can ſcarcely exceed, and which ſeldom equals, the

injury his competitor ſuffers, is the circumſtance which moſt tranſports his heart with delight. For this he watches; for this he calculates. An honourable gameſter does not ſeize with premeditation the moment when his adverſary is deprived by wine or any other cauſe of his uſual ſelf-poſſeſſion. He does not ſeek with ſober malice to play upon his paſſions. He does not enter with avidity into the conteſt with an unpractiſed, but preſuming rival. But he cannot avoid rejoicing, when he finds that accident has given him an unuſual advantage. I have often thought that I could better underſtand how a man of honour could reconcile himſelf to the accurſed and murderous trade of war, than to the ſyſtem of the gaming-table. In war he fights with a ſtranger, a man with whom he has no habits of kindneſs, and who is fairly appriſed that he comes againſt him with ruinous

ruinous intent. But in play he robs perhaps his brother, his friend, the partner of his boſom; or, in every event, a man ſeduced into the ſnare with all the arts of courteſy, and whom he ſmiles upon, even while he ſtabs.

I am talking here the mere reaſon and common ſenſe of the queſtion as it relates to mankind in general. But it is with other feelings that I reflect upon the concern I have myſelf individually in the ſubject. Years roll on in vain; ages themſelves are uſeleſs here; looking forward, as I do, to an exiſtence that ſhall endure till time ſhall be no more; no time can wipe away the remembrance of the bitter anguiſh that I have endured, the conſequence of gaming. It is torture! It is madneſs! Poverty, I have drained thy cup to the dregs! I have ſeen my wife and my children looking to me in vain for bread! Which is the moſt

intolerable diſtreſs? That of the period, in which all the comforts of life gradually left me; in which I caught at every fragment of promiſe, and every fragment failed; in which I roſe every morning to pamper myſelf with empty deluſions; in which I ate the apples of purgatory, fair without, but within bitterneſs and aſhes; in which I toſſed, through endleſs, ſightleſs nights, upon the couch of diſappointment and deſpair? Or the period, when at length all my hopes were at an end; when I fled with horror to a foreign climate; when my family, that ſhould have been my comfort, gave me my moſt poignant agony; when I looked upon them, naked, deſtitute and exiles, with the tremendous thought—what and who it was that had cauſed their ruin? Adverſity, without conſolation, adverſity, when its ſting is remorſe, ſelf-abhorrence and ſelf-contempt,—hell has no miſery

miſery by which it can be thrown into ſhade or exceeded!

Why do I dwell upon, or at leaſt why do I anticipate, this deteſted circumſtance of my ſtory? Let me add one remark in this place, and paſs on to the other particulars of this epoch of my prodigality. It is true, I muſt take this ſhameful appellation to myſelf—I was a gameſter. But, in the beginning, I took no concern in that ſpecies of ſcience which is often implied in that appellation. My games were games of hazard, not of ſkill. It appeared to my diſtempered apprehenſion, to be only a mode in which for a man to diſplay his fortitude and philoſophy. I was flattered with the practice of gaming, becauſe I ſaw in it, when gracefully purſued, the magnanimity of the Stoic, combined with the manners of a man of the world; a magnanimity that no ſucceſs is able to

intoxicate, and no viciſſitude to ſubvert. I committed my property to the hazard of the die; and I placed my ambition in laughing alike at the favours of fortune, and her frowns. In the ſequel however I found myſelf deceived. The fickle goddeſs ſufficiently proved that ſhe had the power of making me ſerious. But in her moſt tremendous reverſes I was never influenced to do any thing that the moſt ſcrupulous gameſter regards as diſhonourable. I ſay not this for the purpoſe of giving colour and ſpeciouſneſs to my tale. I ſay it, becauſe I have laid it down to myſelf in this narrative as a ſacred principle, to relate the ſimple, unaltered truth.

Another characteriſtic of the reign of Francis the Firſt, is its gallantries. It is well known how much the king was himſelf occupied with attachments of this ſort; his government was rather the

the government of women than of politicians; and the manners of the ſovereign ſtrongly tended to fix the habits of his ſubjects. A very young man uſually rather takes the tone of his paſſions from thoſe about him, than forms one that is properly his own; and this was my caſe in the preſent inſtance as well as in the preceding. Originally of an amorous conſtitution, I ſhould perhaps have quieted the reſtleſſneſs of my appetites without oſtentation and eclat, had not the conduct of my youthful aſſociates in general led me to regard gallantry as an accompliſhment indiſpenſibly neceſſary in a young man of rank. It muſt be confeſſed indeed that this offence againſt the rigour of diſcipline has a thouſand advantages over that of gaming. Few women of regular and reputable lives, have that eaſe of manners, that flow of fancy, and that graceful intrepidity

of thinking and expreſſing themſelves, that is ſometimes to be found among thoſe who have diſcharged themſelves in a certain degree from the tyranny of cuſtom. There is ſomething irreſiſtibly captivating in that voluptuouſneſs, which, while it aſſumes a certain air of freedom, uniformly and with preference conforms itſelf to the dictates of unſophiſticated delicacy. A judicious and limited voluptuouſneſs, is neceſſary to the cultivation of the mind, to the poliſhing of the manners, to the refining of ſentiment, and the development of the underſtanding; and a woman deficient in this reſpect, may be of uſe for the government of our families, but can neither add to the enjoyments, nor fix the partiality, of a man of animation and taſte.

But, whatever there may be in theſe conſiderations, certain it is, that the conduct

conduct I purſued in matters of gallantry, led me into great and ſerious expences. The miſtreſſes, with whom I chanced to aſſociate, had neither the inexpreſſible captivation of madame de Chateaubriant *, nor the aſpiring and impreſſive manners of the dutcheſs d' Etampes †. They had however beauty and vivacity, frolic without rudeneſs, and ſoftneſs without timidity. They had paid ſome regard to points of knowledge and taſte, conſidering theſe as additional means for fixing the partiality of their paramours, and knowing that they had no ſecurity for the permanence of their proſperity but in the variety of their attractions. In their ſociety I was led into new trains of reflection, a nicer conſideration of human paſſion and the varieties of human character, and, above all, into a

* † Miſtreſſes of Francis I.

greater quickneſs and delicacy in matter of intellectual taſte. My hours, for the moſt part, rolled ſwiftly and eaſily away, ſometimes in the ſociety of the young, the gay and the ambitious of my own ſex, and ſometimes in the ſofter and more delicious intercourſe of the fair. I lived in the midſt of all that Paris could at that time furniſh of ſplendid and luxurious. This ſyſtem of living was calculated to lull me in pleaſing dreams, and to waſte away exiſtence in delirious ſoftneſs. It ſufficiently accorded with the ſad period of our ſovereign's captivity, when my young compatriots ſought to drown the ſenſe of public and patriotic conſiderations in copious draughts of pleaſure; nor did the monarch's return immediately reſtore to France her former haughtineſs and pride.

The courſe of ſenſuality in which I was now engaged, though it did not abſo-

abſolutely ſink into groſſneſs, may well be ſuppoſed to have trod upon the very edge of licence. I and my companions were young; we were made fearleſs and preſuming by fortune and by rank; we had laid aſide thoſe more rigorous reſtraints which render the ſoberer part of mankind plauſible and decent, by making them timid and trite. I will not contaminate the minds of my innocent and inexperienced readers by entering into the detail of the follies in which I was engaged.

One thing it is neceſſary for me to remark as eſſential to the main thread of my ſtory. My expences of all kinds, during this period of ſelf-deſertion, drained my reſources, but did not tarniſh my good name. My exceſſes were regarded by ſome as ornamental and becoming, but by all were admitted as venial. The laurels I had won in the field of military honour were not obſcured

obſcured by my ſubſequent conduct. I was univerſally ranked among the moſt promiſing and honourable of the young noblemen of France. I had ſome rivals; I did not paſs through this turbulent and diverſified ſcene wholly without diſputes; but no one caſt a reflection upon my name, no one ventured to ſpeak of me in terms of ſuperciliouſneſs and opprobrium. Nor was my temper more injured than my reputation. From every diſpute I extricated myſelf with grace and propriety; I ſtudied the pleaſure and eaſe of all with whom I aſſociated; and no man enjoyed more extenſively than I did the ſweets of friendſhip, as far as the ſweets of friendſhip can be extenſively enjoyed.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

I HAD been now two years in habits of life and a mode of expence extremely injurious to my patrimony, when a circumſtance occurred, which promiſed completely to deliver me from the ruinous conſequences of my own folly. This was no other than my encounter with that incomparable woman, who afterwards became the partner of my life, and the mother of my children. I cannot even now recollect her without tears: the ſentiment which her very name excites in my mind, is a mingled feeling, on the one hand, of the moſt exquiſite and unſpeakable delight, a feeling that elevates and expands and electrifies my throbbing heart; and, on the other, of the

the bittereſt anguiſh and regret.—I muſt develop the ſource of this feeling.

Marguerite Louiſe Iſabeau de Damville was, at the period of our firſt meeting, in the nineteenth year of her age. Her complexion was of the moſt perfect tranſparency, her eyes black and ſparkling, and her eyebrows dark and long. Such were the perfect ſmoothneſs and clearneſs of her ſkin, that at nineteen ſhe appeared five years younger than ſhe was, and ſhe long retained this extreme juvenility of form. Her ſtep was airy and light as that of a young fawn, yet at the ſame time firm, and indicative of ſtrength of body and vigour of mind. Her voice, like the whole of her external appearance, was expreſſive of undeſigning, I had almoſt ſaid childiſh, ſimplicity. Yet, with all this playfulneſs of appearance, her underſtanding was bold

and

and correct. Her mind was well furniſhed with every thing that could add to her accompliſhments as a wife or a mother. Her indulgent parents had procured her every advantage of education, and circumſtances had been uncommonly favourable to her improvement. She was encouraged and aſſiſted in the art of drawing, for which ſhe diſcovered a very early talent, by Leonardo da Vinci; and ſhe formed her poetical taſte from the converſation and inſtructions of Clement Marot. But, amidſt the ſingular aſſemblage of her intellectual accompliſhments, there was nothing by which ſhe was ſo much diſtinguiſhed, as the uncommon prudence of her judgments, and the unalterable amiableneſs of her manners. This was the woman deſtined to crown my happineſs, and conſummate my miſery. If I had never known her, I ſhould never have taſted of true pleaſure;

ſure; if I had been guided by her counſels, I ſhould not have drained to the very dregs the cup of anguiſh.

The houſe of her father, the marquis de Damville, was the reſort of all the moſt eminent wits and ſcholars of that period, particularly of Marot, Rabelais, Eraſmus and Scaliger. This was my firſt inducement to frequent it. My education had inſpired me with an inextinguiſhable love of literature; and the diſſipation in which I was at this time involved, could not entirely interrupt the propenſity. The moſt thoughtleſs and extravagant period of my life had occaſional intervals of ſtudy and reflection; and the gay, animated and ingenious converſation of the men I have mentioned, had always peculiar charms for me.

I had continued for ſome time to viſit at the marquis's hotel, before I encountered the beautiful Marguerite.

The

The firſt time I ſaw her, ſhe made a deep impreſſion upon me. The marquis, who was one of the moſt benevolent and enlightened of mankind, had been led by my character and manners to conceive a warm friendſhip for me. He ſaw the ruin in which I was heedleſsly involving myſelf, and believed that it was not yet too late to ſave me. As he thought that there was no method ſo likely to effect my reformation as the interpoſition of domeſtic affections, he was not unwilling to encourage the attachment I began to feel for his daughter. On my part I wanted but little encouragement. I no ſooner obſerved her manners, and became acquainted with her merits, than my heart was unalterably fixed. I became as it were a new man. I was like one, who, after his eyes had grown imperceptibly dim, till at length every object appeared indiſtinct and of a gloomy general

general hue, has his ſight inſtantaneouſly reſtored, and beholds the fabric of the univerſe in its genuine clearneſs, brilliancy and truth. I was aſtoniſhed at my own folly that I could ſo long have found gratification in pleaſures ſo mean and ſenſual. I was aſhamed of my own degradation. I could not endure the compariſon between the ſhowy, unſubſtantial attractions of the women I had hitherto frequented, and the charms of the adorable Marguerite. The purity of her mind ſeemed to give a celeſtial brilliancy and ſoftneſs to the beauties of her perſon. The groſs and brutal purſuits of the debauchee are often indeed deſcribed by the ſame epithets as the virtuous and refined paſſion with which I was now for the firſt time inſpired; but experience convinced me that they differed in their moſt eſſential features.

The

The marquis ſaw the ſtate of my mind, and addreſſed me thus. Count, ſaid he, I feel the moſt ardent friendſhip for you. I am inexpreſſibly concerned for your welfare. You will be convinced of this, when I have furniſhed you with the clue to my late conduct towards you. I regard you, if not as a ruined man, at leaſt as a man in the high road to ruin. Your preſent habits are of the moſt dangerous ſort; they appear to you perfectly conformable to principles of the ſtricteſt honour; nay, they come recommended to you by a certain eclat and dignity with which they ſeem to be ſurrounded. I could ſay to you, Recollect yourſelf. Be not miſled by deluſive appearances. Conſider the preſent ſtate of your fortune, and the ſtate in which your mother left it. You cannot be ignorant how greatly it is impaired. How has this circumſtance

ſtance ariſen? Have your revenues been expended in the ſervice of your country? Have you purchaſed any thing by them that will confer on you laſting renown? Put together the ſum of actions, which, piece by piece, you have been willing to regard as indifferent and innocent, if not as graceful and becoming. You cannot but be ſtruck with their monſtrous deformity. Is it poſſible that you can be ignorant of the nature of poverty? There is ſuch a thing as honourable poverty. The poverty of Cincinnatus was honourable, who impoveriſhed himſelf by paying the fine which was factiouſly impoſed on his ſon, and then was contented to paſs his time alternately between the higheſt ſituations and the moſt rigid ſimplicity. The poverty of a man of genius, ſuch as Rabelais, if not honourable, is intereſting, when we compare his merits and worth

worth with that of many of thoſe perſons upon whom fortune has blindly laviſhed her favours. It is honourable, if he have declined the means of enriching himſelf by the ſacrifice of his independence and his principles. But of all earthly things the moſt contemptible, is the man who, having waſted his goods in riotous living, yet hungers after the luxuries that have proved his bane, and feaſts himſelf upon the ſteam of dainties of which he has loſt the ſubſtance. Poverty, always ſufficiently diſadvantageous in a degenerate age, where attention and courtſhip are doled forth with ſcales of gold, is tremendous to him. He is the ſcorn of all mankind. Wherever he is a gueſt, he is invited only to be trampled upon and inſulted. He is capable of nothing, and is a burthen to ſociety and mankind. The helpleſſneſs of age advances upon him with ſtealing ſteps,

and

and he is deſtined to gather all its miſeries and none of its conſolations.

I might have talked to you thus, but I refuſed it. I apprehend ſomething of the nature of advice. I know that it can ſeldom be attended with its genuine effect, and will never be received with deference and pleaſure, where its motives are capable of miſconſtruction. If I had talked to you thus, I might have appeared to be indulging the tyranny of age; I might have ſeemed to aſſume an unbecoming air of ſuperiority and command: it could not have been clear that I was really and honeſtly intereſted, in that about which I affected ſo much concern. I doubt not the ingenuouſneſs of your nature. I doubt not, that you would have been ſtruck with the picture. But I muſt be permitted to doubt the adequate and laſting effect of my expoſtulation. I was not willing

ling by my forwardneſs and loquacity to wear out one of the great ſprings of human improvement.

I have determined on your reform. For that purpoſe I think it neceſſary to combine my remonſtrances and advice, with a change of your habits and ſituation. You have taſted largely of what are commonly called the pleaſures of life, but there are pleaſures that you have not taſted. At this moment you anticipate them, and anticipate them with the ardour of a lover. But you know not yet all the gratifications that attend upon domeſtic affections.

I am willing to beſtow upon you my daughter. I conſent to prove the purity of my advice, and the ſincerity of my regard, by committing her happineſs to the riſk. She is a treaſure, the equal of which perhaps the world does not hold. I ſpeak not of her perſonal attractions. But in underſtanding,

accompliſhments and virtue, I firmly believe, no woman living can compare with her. In poſſeſſing her, you will be bleſſed beyond the lot of princes. But, at the ſame time that I ſhall thus put happineſs within your graſp, remember that I commit to your diſpoſal the happineſs of Marguerite. You are a worthy and an honourable man; your talents and your virtues will conſtitute her felicity. Her portion will redeem the injury which your patrimony has ſuffered from your exceſſes, and you will have enough for yourſelves, and for your mutual offspring. I cannot believe, that, with ſuch a depoſit intruſted to you, you will conſent to bring her to miſery and ruin.

I have one condition however to ſtipulate with you. I require of you as the pledge of her happineſs, that you break off your preſent modes of life, that you ſeparate yourſelf from your connections,

connections, and retire into the country upon your paternal eſtate. You are yet too young to be in danger from that tyranny of cuſtom, which often renders men more advanced in life incapable of reliſhing the ſimple and genuine pleaſures. You will find contentment and joy in the ſociety of my daughter, and in the boſom of your riſing family. You will be happy in the circle of your own hearth, and have little to aſk of the reſt of mankind. If, in any ill-omened and inauſpicious moment, the allurements of your preſent vices (forgive the plainneſs of my ſpeech) ſhould reſume their power over you, I hope at leaſt that I ſhall never live to ſee it; that I ſhall not be taught by bitter experience, that I have ſacrificed to the diſintereſtedneſs of my friendſhip the happineſs of my daughter and of my poſterity!

My heart weeps blood, while I record the admonitions of this noble and generous man. A nobler France did not contain through all her boundaries! Refined by literature, poliſhed by the beſt ſociety his age could afford, grown grey in the field of honour, and particularly diſtinguiſhed by the perſonal attachment and confidence of his ſovereign! What was all this advice to me! What return did I make to this unparalleled kindneſs and friendſhip! I ruined this admirable woman! I involved her in poverty and ſhame! With the moſt ſavage barbarity I prepared for her an immature grave! Can I forget this! Of what avail to me are immortal life and immortal youth? Oh, Marguerite, Marguerite! For ever thy image haunts me! For ever thy ghoſt upbraids me! How little have I proved myſelf worthy of ſuch a partner! Rather what puniſhment, what

what plagues, what ſhame and deteſtation have I not deſerved! Praiſed be Heaven! the laſt prayer of the marquis of Damville at leaſt was granted! He did not live to witneſs my relapſe, my profligacy and inſanity!

I reſume the thread of my ſtory.—I liſtened to the addreſs of the marquis with reverence and admiration. I accepted his conditions with joy. I married his adorable daughter, and conducted her to my paternal eſtate in the Bordelois. Now only it was that I taſted of perfect happineſs. To judge from my own experience in this ſituation, I ſhould ſay, that nature has atoned for all the diſaſters and miſeries ſhe ſo copiouſly and inceſſantly pours upon her ſons, by this one gift, the tranſcendant enjoyment and nameleſs delights which, wherever the heart is pure and the ſoul is refined, wait on the attachment of two perſons of op-

poſite ſexes. My beloved Marguerite guided and directed me, at the ſame time that ſhe was ever ſtudying my gratification. I inſtructed her by my experience, while ſhe enlightened me by the rectitude and deciſion of her taſte. Ours was a ſober and dignified happineſs, and its very ſobriety ſerved to give it additional voluptuouſneſs. We had each our ſeparate purſuits, whether for the cultivation of our minds, or the promotion of our mutual intereſts. Separation gave us reſpectability in each other's eyes, while it prepared us to enter with freſh ardour into ſociety and converſation. In company with each other, hours paſſed over us, and appeared but minutes. It has been ſaid to be a peculiar felicity for any one to be praiſed by a man who is himſelf eminently a ſubject of praiſe: how much happier to be prized and loved by a perſon worthy

worthy of love? A man may be prized and valued by his friend; but in how different a ſtyle of ſentiment from the regard and attachment that may reign in the boſom of his miſtreſs or his wife? Self-complacency and ſelf-ſatisfaction may perhaps be numbered among the principal ſources of contentment. It is neceſſary for him who would endure exiſtence with patience, that he ſhould conceive himſelf to be ſomething, that he ſhould be perſuaded he is not a cypher in the muſter-roll of man. How bitter is the anguiſh we are ſometimes doomed to ſuſtain in this reſpect from the marks we receive of other men's indifference and contempt? To feel that we are loved by one whoſe love we have deſerved, to be employed in the mutual interchange of the marks of this love, habitually to ſtudy the happineſs of one by whom our happineſs is ſtudied in return, this

is the moſt deſirable, as it is the genuine and unadulterated condition of human nature. I muſt have ſome one to ſympathiſe with; I cannot bear to be cut off from all relations; I deſire to experience a confidence, a concord, an attachment, that cannot riſe up between common acquaintance. In every ſtate we long for ſome fond boſom on which to reſt our weary head, ſome ſpeaking eye with which to exchange the glances of intelligence and affection. Then the ſoul warms and expands itſelf; then it ſhuns the obſervation of every other beholder; then it melts with feelings that are inexpreſſible, but that the heart underſtands without the aid of words; then the eyes ſwim with rapture; then the frame languiſhes with enjoyment; then the ſoul burns with fire; then the two perſons thus bleſt, are no longer two, diſtance vaniſhes, one thought animates,

animates, one mind informs them. Thus love acts; thus it is ripened to perfection; never does man feel himſelf ſo much alive, ſo truly etherial, as when, burſting the bonds of diffidence, uncertainty and reſerve, he pours himſelf entire into the boſom of the woman he adores.

Marguerite de Damville was particularly diſtinguiſhed from every other woman I ever knew by the juſtneſs of her taſte and the vividneſs of her feelings. This circumſtance was a fund of inexhauſtible delight and improvement to me. We were both of us well acquainted with the moſt eminent poets and fine writers of modern times. But, when we came to read them together, they preſented themſelves in a point of view in which they had never been ſeen by us before. It is perhaps more important that poetry and every thing that excites the ima-

gination or appeals to the heart, ſhould be read in ſolitude than in ſociety. But the true way to underſtand our author in theſe caſes, is to employ each of theſe modes in ſucceſſion. The terrible, the majeſtic, the voluptuous and the melting, are all of them in a conſiderable degree affairs of ſympathy, and we never judge of them ſo infallibly or with ſo much ſatisfaction, as when, in the preſence of each other, the emotion is kindled in either boſom at the ſame inſtant, the eye-beams, pregnant with ſentiment and meaning, involuntarily meet and mingle, the voice of the reader becomes modulated by the ideas of his author, and that of the hearer, by an accidental interjection of momentary comment or applauſe, confeſſes its accord. It was in this manner that we read together the admirable ſonnets of Petrarch, and paſſed in review the ſublime effuſions

of

of Dante. The letters of Eloiſa to Abelard afforded us ſingular delight. We ſearched into the effuſions of the Troubadours, and, among all their abſurdities and inequality, we found a wildneſs, a daring pouring forth of the ſoul, an unpruned richneſs of imagination, and from time to time a grandeur of conception and audacious eccentricity of thought, that filled us with unlooked for tranſport. At other times, when not regularly engaged in this ſpecies of reading, we would repeat paſſages to each other, communicate the diſcoveries of this ſort that either had made in ſolitude, and point out unobſerved beauties, that perhaps neither of us would have remarked, but for the ſuggeſtions of the other. It is impoſſible for two perſons to be conſtituted ſo much alike, but that one of them ſhould have a more genuine and inſtantaneous reliſh for one ſort of ex-

cellence, and another for another. Thus we added to each other's ſtores, and acquired a largeneſs of conception and liberality of judgment that neither of us would have arrived at, if ſeparate. It is difficult to imagine how prolific this kind of amuſement proved of true happineſs. We were mutually delighted to remark the accord of our feelings, and ſtill more ſo, as we perceived that accord to be hourly increaſing, and what ſtruck either as a blemiſh in the other, wearing out and diſappearing. We were alſo led by the ſame means to advert to the powers of mind exiſting in each, the rectitude of judgment and delicacy of feeling. As our attachment hourly increaſed, we rejoiced in this reciprocation of benefits, while each gave or received ſomething that added to value of mind and worth of character. Mutual eſteem was inceſſantly kept alive, and mutual

eſteem

eſteem is the only ſubſtantial baſis of love. Each of us hourly bleſſed our common lot, while each believed it impracticable elſewhere to have found ſo much worth blended with ſo much ſweetneſs.

But we did not confine ourſelves to the library and fire-ſide. We walked, we rode, we travelled together. We obſerved together the beauties of nature, and the ſyſtem of the univerſe. We traverſed many provinces of France, and ſome parts of Italy and Spain. We examined together the characters of mankind, as they are modified by the varieties of natural deſcent, or the diverſities of political government. In all this we found peculiar gratification. There is ſomething in the ſcent and impreſſion of a balmy atmoſphere, in the luſtre of ſunſhine, in the azure heaven and the purple clouds, in the opening of proſpects on this ſide and on that, in the contemplation of verdure and fertility

fertility and induſtry and ſimplicity and cheerfulneſs in all their variations, in the very act and exerciſe of travelling, peculiarly congenial to the human frame. It expands the heart, it makes the ſpirit dance, and exquiſitely diſpoſes us for ſocial enjoyment. The mind becomes more elevated and refined, it aſſumes a microſcopical and unwonted ſenſibility, it feels things which in ordinary moments are unheeded and unknown, it enjoys things too evaneſcent for a name and too minute to be arreſted, it trembles with pleaſure through every fibre and every articulation.

One thing is neceſſary to be mentioned in this place, though, while it adds to the fidelity of delineation, I am aware it breaks the tone of feeling and the harmony of the picture. But it is not my intention in this hiſtory to paſs myſelf for better than I am. I have laid down to myſelf the ſacred maxim

maxim of abſolute truth and impartiality. I muſt confeſs therefore, with whatever anguiſh, my extreme inferiority to my incomparable partner. She had all the ſimplicity of genuine taſte. The more ſhe delivered herſelf up to nature, the greater was her content. All ſuperfluous appendages and ſhow appeared to her as ſo many obſtacles to enjoyment. She derived her happineſs from the tone of her own mind, and ſtood in no need of the gaping admiration and ſtupid wonder of others to make her feel herſelf happy. But I retained ſtill the original vice of my mind. The geſtures of worſhip, and the voice of applauſe were neceſſary to me. I did not ſuffice to myſelf. I was not ſatisfied with the tranquil and inglorious fruition of genuine pleaſures, forgetting the vain and anxious tumult of the world, and forgotten by thoſe who figured on its theatre.

theatre. It may be, that Marguerite could, and ought by inſenſible degrees, to have rooted out this diſeaſe of my mind. But I am concerned only with the ſtatement of facts; and I know that no ſuch thing was the effect of our intercourſe.

This abſurd paſſion did not however at this time lead me to any fatal extremities. It contented itſelf with the frivolous gratification reſulting from a certain portion of oſtentation and expence. I maintained a conſiderable train of ſervants. My apartments were magnificent, and my furniture ſplendid. When we travelled, it was with an attendance little ſhort of princely. Idiot that I was, to regard this as an addition to the genuine pleaſures which I have above enumerated! When we were at home, every accidental gueſt was received and entertained with extraordinary pomp, a pomp not directed

to

to add to his accommodation, but that was deſigned to leave him impreſſed with aſtoniſhment and admiration at the ſpirit of his hoſt. Often indeed did I feel this oſtentation an incumbrance. Often did I languiſh for the eaſe and freedom which reſult from a mediocrity of circumſtances. But this I called, doing honour to my anceſtors and my country, and vindicating the conſideration due to the houſe of St. Leon.

To quit this painful recollection.—A circumſtance which tended at this time to fill up the meaſure of my happineſs, conſiſted in the dear pledges which Marguerite bore me of our mutual affection. It is impoſſible for him who has not experienced it, to conceive the accumulation which a genuine tenderneſs derives from this ſource. The difficulties are many, that attend upon pregnancy; trifles are at that period

ſources

ſources of fatigue and injury; it is neceſſary that the perſon ſhould be protected, and the mind tranquil. We love to watch over a delicate plant, that appears to call for all our anxiety and attention. There is in this caſe the ſentiment, without the repulſive circumſtances, that attend upon our ſympathy with a dangerous and alarming diſeaſe. Marguerite, by her ſenſibility and growing attachment, abundantly rewarded my cares. At length the critical period arrives, when an event ſo extraordinary occurs, as cannot fail to put the human frame in conſiderable jeopardy. Never ſhall I forget the interview between us immediately ſubſequent to her firſt parturition, the effuſion of ſoul with which we met each other after all danger ſeemed to have ſubſided, the kindneſs which animated us, increaſed as it was by ideas of peril and ſuffering, the ſacred

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ſenſation with which the mother preſented her infant to her huſband, or the complacency with which we read in each other's eyes a common ſentiment of melting tenderneſs and inviolable attachment!

This, ſhe ſeemed to ſay, is the joint reſult of our common attachment. It partakes equally of both, and is the ſhrine in which our ſubſtance and our life have been poured together, never to be ſeparated. Let other lovers teſtify their engagements by preſents and tokens; we record and ſtamp our attachment in this precious creature, a creature of that ſpecies which is more admirable than any thing elſe the world has to boaſt, a creature ſuſceptible of pleaſure and pain, of affection and love, of ſentiment and fancy, of wiſdom and virtue. This creature will daily ſtand in need of an aid we ſhall delight to afford; will require our meditations and exertions

tions to forward its improvement, and confirm its merits and its worth. We ſhall each blend our exertions for that purpoſe, and our union, confirmed by this common object of our labour and affection, will every day become more ſacred and indiſſoluble.—All this the preſent weakneſs of my beloved Marguerite would not allow her to ſay. But all this occurred to my reflections; and, when we had time tranquilly to compare our recollection of the event, it plainly appeared that in all this our hearts and conceptions had moſt truly ſympathiſed.

The poſſeſſing a third object, a common centre of anxiety to both, is far from weakening the regard of ſuch a couple for each other. It does not ſeparate or divert them; it is a new link of connection. Each is attached to it the more for the ſake of either; each regards it as a ſort of branch or ſcion,

ſcion, repreſenting the parent; each rejoices in its health, its good-humour, its ſmiles, its increaſe in ſize, in ſtrength and in faculties, principally from the idea of the gratification they will communicate to the other. Were it not for this idea, were it poſſible the pleaſure ſhould not be mutual, the ſentiment would be ſtripped of its principal elevation and refinement; it would be comparatively cold, ſelfiſh, ſolitary and inane.

In the firſt ten years of our marriage my wife brought me five children, two ſons and three daughters. The ſecond ſon only died in his infancy. My predominant paſſion at this time was that of domeſtic pleaſures and employments, and I devoted myſelf, jointly with the mother, to the cultivation of the minds of my children. They all in a conſiderable degree rewarded our care; they were all amiable. Taught by the example

example of their parents, they lived in uncommon harmony and affection. Charles, the eldeſt, was a lad of a bold and active diſpoſition; but the ſentiments of virtue and honour that were infuſed into him both by Marguerite and myſelf, found a favourable reception, and promiſed to render thoſe qualities, which, if left to themſelves might have been turbulent and dangerous, productive of the happieſt conſequences. Julia, his eldeſt ſiſter, was uncommonly mild and affectionate, alive to the ſlighteſt variations of treatment, profoundly depreſſed by every mark of unkindneſs, but exquiſitely ſenſible to demonſtrations of ſympathy and attachment. She appeared little formed to ſtruggle with the difficulties of life and the frowns of the world; but, in periods of quietneſs and tranquillity, nothing could exceed the ſweetneſs of her character and the

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faſcination of her manners. Her chief attachment was to her mother, though ſhe was by no means capable of her mother's active beneficence and heroic fortitude. Louiſa, the ſecond daughter, reſembled her mother in perſon, and promiſed to reſemble her in character. Marguerite, the youngeſt, differed from the whole family, in the playfulneſs and frolic of her diſpoſition. Her vivacity was inexhauſtible, and was continually diſplaying itſelf in innocent tricks, and ſmart, unexpected ſallies. Nothing could poſſibly be more ingenuous than this admirable infant; nothing more kind, conſiderate and enthuſiaſtic in her tenderneſs and grief, when an occaſion occurred to call forth theſe ſentiments. But, the moment the ſorrowful occaſion was over, ſhe would reſume all her vivacity; and even ſometimes, in the midſt of her tears, ſome trait of her native humour

humour would eſcape. I know not whether all the family were not more attached to the little Marguerite than to any other individual member, as ſhe certainly oftenеſt contributed to their amuſement and pleaſure.—Such was the amiable circle, one and all of whom have been involved by me in the moſt tremendous ruin and diſgrace.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

CHARLES was now nine years of age. His mother and myſelf had delighted ourſelves with obſerving and forwarding the opening of his infant mind, and had hitherto been contented with the aſſiſtance of a neighbouring prieſt by way of preceptor. But, as he was our only ſon, we were deſirous that he ſhould obtain every advantage of education. We were neither of us illiterate; but, in the courſe of twenty-three years, which had elapſed ſince I was myſelf of Charles's age, the progreſs of literature and the literary paſſion in Europe had been aſtoniſhingly great, and I was anxious that he ſhould realiſe in his own perſon every benefit

which the fortunate and illuſtrious period of human affairs in which he began to exiſt, ſeemed to hold out to him. Beſide, there was an impetuoſity and forwardneſs in his character, that ſeemed ill to brook the profound ſolitude and retirement in which his mother and I were contented to live. His caſe ſeemed to demand companions of his own age, a little world of fellow-beings, with whom he might engage in their petty buſineſs and cares, with whoſe paſſions his own might joſtle or might ſympathiſe, who might kindle his emulation, and open to him the field of fraternal aſſociations and amity.

There was however a conſiderable difficulty attendant on this queſtion. The ſchools of real literature in France, where languages were properly taught, and ſcience might be acquired, were at this time exceedingly few. The near-

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eſt univerſity was that of Toulouſe, at the diſtance of twenty-ſix leagues. This was, practically ſpeaking, as far from us as Paris itſelf. Was then our darling child, to be torn from his parents, from all he was accuſtomed to ſee, and all by whom he was loved, to be planted in the midſt of ſtrangers, and to have his mind excited to obſervation, and the ſpirit of generous contention rouſed, at the riſque of ſuppreſſing the tender affections of his ſoul, and the ſentiments of duty, reliance and love? There ſeemed however to be no alternative. It was neceſſary that a temporary ſeparation ſhould take place. Intellectual improvement was a point by all means to be purſued; and we muſt direct our efforts to keep alive along with it, thoſe winning qualities, and that ſoftneſs of heart, which had hitherto rendered him ſo eminently our

delight. Such were our fond ſpeculations and projects for the future.

It was at length determined that I ſhould proceed along with him to Paris. I could there obſerve upon the ſpot the ſtate of the univerſity, and the means of learning that exiſted in the metropolis; and could conſult with ſome of thoſe eminent luminaries with whom I had become acquainted at the houſe of the marquis de Damville. Marguerite declined accompanying me upon this occaſion. Her father was dead; ſhe could not think of quitting her daughters for any conſiderable time; and our nuptial engagement of reſiding always in the country, gave her a repugnance to the removing with her whole family to Paris. It was left probable that ſhe might come to me when the buſineſs was ſettled, if at that time it was determined to leave her ſon at the capital;

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and that ſhe might then reconduct me to the place, which had been the ſcene of all my happineſs, but which I was deſtined never to reviſit in peace.

Preliminaries being at length fully adjuſted in the manner that appeared ſuitable to the importance of the occaſion, I ſet off for the metropolis of my country, which I had ſeen only once, and that for a very ſhort period, in the courſe of ten years. That viſit had been produced by a very melancholy circumſtance, the death of the marquis of Damville. Marguerite and myſelf had then been ſummoned, and arrived at his hotel but a few days before he expired. Though extremely weakened by the mortal diſeaſe under which he laboured, he retained all the faculties of his mind, and converſed with us in the moſt affectionate and endearing terms. He congratulated us upon our mutual felicity; nor could the ſituation

in which we found him, upon the brink of an everlaſting oblivion of all earthly things, abate the ſincerity and fervour of his delight. He thanked me for my carriage and conduct as a huſband, which, he ſaid, might with propriety be held up as a model to the human ſpecies. He applauded himſelf for that mingled diſcernment and determination, which, as he affirmed, had ſo opportunely ſecured my virtue and his daughter's happineſs. He truſted that I was now ſufficiently weaned from thoſe habits which had formerly given him ſo much alarm. At the ſame time he conjured me, by every motive that an overflowing enthuſiaſm could ſuggeſt, to perſiſt in my good reſolutions, and never to change that reſidence, where I had found every degree of delight of which the human mind is in its preſent condition ſuſceptible. Do not, ſaid he, be drawn aſide

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by ambition; do not be dazzled by the glitter of idle pomp and decoration; do not enter the remoteſt circle of the vortex of diſſipation! Live in the midſt of your family; cultivate domeſtic affections; be the ſolace and joy of your wife; watch for the preſent and future welfare of your children; and be aſſured that you will then be found no contemptible or unbeneficial member of the community at large!

Such were the laſt advices of the marquis of Damville. Excellent man! how ill were your leſſons remembered! how ill your kindneſs remunerated! He died in the ſixth year of our marriage. The ſerious impreſſion which this event produced in my mind, gave me ſmall inclination to enter into any ſpecies of ſociety, and diſpoſed me to quit Paris as ſoon as every reſpect had been paid to the obſequies of the deceaſed.

Upon my arrival in the metropolis on the preſent occaſion, I immediately ſought to renew my acquaintance with thoſe amiable and eminent perſons, who had for the moſt part conſtituted the circle of the marquis of Damville. They received me with that intereſt and attention, that I have uſually found attendant on a cultivated mind. The pleaſure was conſiderable, that reſulted from meeting them thus again, after ten years ceſſation of intercourſe. A few of them indeed were dead, and others diſperſed by various accidents in different parts of France or of Europe. The greater part however I ſtill found in that celebrated city, which might well be conſidered as the metropolis of the civilized world. The king had early been diſtinguiſhed by his love of letters and the arts; and added years, while they abated in his mind the eagerneſs of ambition and glory, gave

gave new ſtrength to his more cultivated propenſities. The liberality of his conduct, and the poliſhed eaſe that characteriſed his manners, produced a general predilection in favour of the capital in which he reſided.

I found all my former friends matured and improved by the ſilent influence of time. Their knowledge was increaſed; their views rendered wider; their converſation was more amuſing and inſtructive, their manners more bland and unaffected. But, if their characters had experienced revolution, mine was more materially changed. I had before encountered them with all the heat and preſumption of youth, with no views ſo much preſent to my mind as thoſe of chivalry and a factitious honour, with no experience but that of a camp. I was impetuous, volatile and diſſipated. I had not reſted long enough upon any one of the flowers of

intellect to extract its honey; and my mind was kept in a ſtate of preternatural agitation by the paſſions of a gameſter. It was now become cool, moderated and tranquil. The ſociety of Marguerite had contributed much to the improvement of my character; I had lived in no idle and brutiſh ſolitude, but in the midſt of contemplation and letters; and I had the paſſions of a huſband and a father, in the extremeſt degree attached to his family. Theſe paſſions will be found perhaps to be the true ſchool of humanity: the man, whoſe ſituation continually exerciſes in him the ſofteſt and moſt amiable charities of our nature, will almoſt infallibly ſurpaſs his brethren in kindneſs to ſympathiſe with, and promptneſs to relieve, the diſtreſſes of others.

Will it be accounted ſtrange that, in Paris, ſurrounded by perſons of various knowledge and liberal benevolence, I found

I found myſelf under the influence of other feelings than any I had lately experienced? I was like a man who had ſuffered long calamity in a famiſhed veſſel or a town beſieged, and is immediately after introduced into the midſt of luxury, to a table loaded with the moſt coſtly dainties. Every viand has to his apprehenſion an exquiſite reliſh, and every wine a delicious flavour, that he never perceived in them before. Let no one from hence infer that my love for Marguerite was diminiſhed; it has already ſufficiently appeared in the courſe of my narrative, that no happineſs could be more conſummate than mine was with this admirable woman. Had I been called upon to chooſe for the ſeat of my future life, between my paternal chateau in the Bordelois with Marguerite to grace my abode, on the one hand, and all the gratifications that Paris could af-

ford on the other, I ſhould not have heſitated even for an inſtant. But the mind of man is made capacious of various pleaſures; and a perſon of ſound and uncorrupted judgment, will perhaps always enjoy with emotion the delights which for a long time before he had not encountered, however enviable his content may have been under their abſence. I delighted to converſe with the men of genius and refinement with whom Paris at this time abounded. It was a feaſt of ſoul of which I had rarely partaken in my rural retreat. I delighted to combine excellence with number, and, to a conſiderable degree at leaſt, variety of intercourſe with ſentiments of regard and friendſhip. In theſe ſelect ſocieties I found no cold ſuppreſſions and reſerve. Their members were brethren in diſpoſition, ſimilar in their purſuits, and congenial in their ſentiments. When any one ſpoke,

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it was that the perſon to whom he addreſſed himſelf might apprehend what was paſſing in his thoughts. They participated with ſincerity and a liberal mind in each other's feelings whether of gay delight or melancholy diſappointment.

Thus ſituated, I forgot for a time my engagements with Marguerite. The ſcenes of St. Leon, its fields, its walks, its woods and its ſtreams, faded from my mind. I forgot the pleaſure with which I had viewed my children ſporting on the green, and the delicious, rural ſuppers which I had ſo often partaken with my wife beneath my vines and my fig-trees at the period of the ſetting-ſun. When I ſet out for Paris, theſe images had dwelt upon my mind, and ſaddened my fancy. At every ſtage I felt myſelf removed ſtill further from the ſcene where my treaſures and my affections were depoſited. But,

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ſhortly after, new ſcenes and new employments engaged my thoughts. The pleaſures which I ſought but weakly at firſt, every time they were taſted increaſed my partiality for them. I ſeemed for a time to be under the influence of an oblivion of my former life. Thus circumſtanced, the folly which had ſo deep a root in my character took hold of me. I hired a magnificent hotel, and entertained at my own expence thoſe perſons in whoſe ſociety I principally delighted. My circles became more numerous than thoſe of the marquis of Damville, and were conducted in a very different ſtyle of ſplendour and profuſion. I correſponded with Marguerite; but I continually found ſome new pretext for lengthening my ſtay; and ſhe on her part, though the kindeſt and moſt indulgent of women, became ſeriouſly alarmed and unhappy.

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As my parties were more numerous than thoſe of the marquis of Damville had been, they were more mixed. Among others I occaſionally aſſociated myſelf with ſome of thoſe noblemen who had been the companions of my former diſſipation and gaming. An obvious conſequence reſulted from this. Parties of play were occaſionally propoſed to me. I reſiſted—I yielded. My firſt compliances were timid, heſitating and painful. I recollected the leſſons and exhortations of my excellent father-in-law. At length however my alarms abated. I reproached myſelf with the want of an honourable confidence in my own firmneſs, and the cowardice of ſuppoſing that I was not to be truſted with the direction of my conduct.

One evening I ventured beyond the cautious limits I had at firſt preſcribed myſelf, and won a conſiderable ſum. This incident produced a ſtrong impreſſion

preſſion upon me, and filled my mind with tumult and agitation. There was a ſecret that I had concealed almoſt from myſelf, but which now recurred to me with tenfold violence. I was living beyond the means I had to diſcharge my expences. My propenſity of this ſort ſeemed to be fatal and irreſiſtible. My marriage with Marguerite had occurred opportunely, to heal the breaches that I had at that time made in my fortune, and to take from me the conſciouſneſs of embarraſſments which I ſhould otherwiſe have deeply felt. The death of the marquis, however deplorable in other reſpects, happened at a period when the ſpirit of profuſion and magnificence which characteriſed me, had again involved my affairs in conſiderable difficulty. It might have been ſuppoſed that theſe two caſes of experience would ſuffice to extirpate my folly. But they had rather the contrary

trary effect. In each of them the event was ſuch, as to prevent extravagance and thoughtleſſneſs from producing their genuine reſults; and of conſequence they appeared leſs criminal and miſchievous in my eyes, than otherwiſe they probably would have appeared. I rather increaſed than diminiſhed my eſtabliſhment upon the death of my father-in-law. I had no reaſonable proſpect of any property hereafter to deſcend to me, that ſhould exonerate me from the conſequences of further prodigality. But I did not advert to this. I ſaw myſelf ſurrounded by my children; they were the delight and ſolace of my life; and yet I was heedleſs of their intereſts. Sometimes I reſolved upon a more rigid economy. But economy is a principle that does not eaſily lay hold of any but a heart framed to receive it. It is a buſineſs of attentive and vigilant detail. It eaſily eſcapes the mind, amidſt

amidſt the impetuoſity of the paſſions, the obſtinacy of rooted propenſities, and the ſeduction of long eſtabliſhed habits. Marguerite indeed did not ſhare with me in theſe follies; the ſimplicity and ingenuouſneſs of her mind were ſuch, that ſhe would have been as happy in a cottage as a palace; but, though ſhe did not partake my vices, an ill-judged forbearance and tenderneſs for my feelings, did not permit her effectually to counteract them. This is perhaps the only defect of character I am able to impute to her.

After I had won the ſum to which I have alluded, I retired to my hotel full of anxious thoughts. It produced upon me in ſome degree the ſame effect as ordinarily belongs to a great calamity. I lay all night ſleepleſs and diſturbed. Ruin and deſpair preſented themſelves to my mind in a thouſand forms.

forms. Heedleſs prodigality and dilapidated revenues paſſed in review before me. I counted the years of my life. I had completed the thirty-ſecond year of my age. This was ſcarcely half the probable duration of human exiſtence. How was I to ſupport the remaining period, a period little aſſorted to difficulties and expedients, and which, in the cloſe of it, ſeems imperiouſly to call for every indulgence? Hitherto an interval of four or five years had repeatedly ſufficed to involve me in ſerious embarraſſment. My children were growing up around me; my family was likely to become ſtill larger; as my offspring increaſed in years, their demands upon my revenues would be more conſiderable. Were theſe demands to be ſlighted? Were my daughters, nay, was the heir of my rank and my name, to be committed to the compaſſion of

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the world, unprovided and forlorn? What a cheerleſs proſpect? What a gloomy and diſconſolate hue did theſe ideas ſpread upon that future, which the health of the human mind requires to have gilded with the beams of hope and expectation? I had already tried the expedient of economy, and I had uniformly found this ineſtimable and only ſheet-anchor of prudence gliding from my deluded graſp. Could I promiſe myſelf better ſucceſs in future? There ſeemed to be ſomething in my habits, whether of inattention, oſtentation or inconſiſtency, that baffled the ſtrongeſt motives by which parſimony and frugality can poſſibly be inforced.

Why did theſe thoughts importunately recur to me in the preſent moment? They were the ſuggeſtions of a malignant genius, thoughts, the deſtination of which was to lead me into a gulph

a gulph of miſery and guilt! While I was going on in a regular train of expence, while I was ſcooping the mine that was to ſwallow me and my hopes together, I had the art to keep theſe reflections at bay. Now that I had met with an unexpected piece of good-fortune, they ruſhed upon me with irreſiſtible violence. Unfortunate coincidence! Miſerable,—rather let me ſay, guilty, abandoned miſcreant!

As ſoon as I roſe in the morning, I went to the cloſet where, the evening before, I had depoſited my recent acquiſitions. I ſpread out the gold before me. I gazed upon it with intentneſs. My eyes, a moment after, rolled in vacancy. I traverſed the apartment with impatient ſteps. All the demon ſeemed to make his deſcent upon my ſoul. This was the firſt time that I had ever felt the ſtruggle of conſcious guilt and diſhonour. I was far indeed

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from anticipating that ſpecies of guilt, and that ſpecies of ruin, which ſoon after overwhelmed me. My mind did not once recur to the poſſibility of any ſerious miſchief. I dwelt only, as gameſters perhaps uſually do, upon the alternative between acquiſition and no acquiſition. I did not take into the account the ungovernableneſs of my own paſſions. I aſſumed it as unqueſtionable, that I could ſtop when I pleaſed. The thoughts that tortured me were, in the firſt place, thoſe of a ſanguine and unexperienced adventurer in a lottery, whoſe mind reſts not for a moment upon the ſum he has riſqued, but who, having in fancy the principal prize already in his poſſeſſion, and having diſtributed it to various objects and purpoſes, ſometimes fearfully recurs to the poſſibility of his diſappointment, and anticipates with terror what will be his ſituation, if deprived of this

this imaginary wealth. I had now for the firſt time opened my eyes to the real ſtate of my affairs, and I clung with proportionable vehemence to this plank which was to bear me from the ſtorm. In the ſecond place, I felt, though darkly and unwillingly, the immorality of my conception. To game may, in ſome inſtances, not be in diametrical oppoſition to liberality of mind; but he who games for the expreſs purpoſe of improving his circumſtances, muſt be an idiot, if he does not ſometimes recollect that the money loſt may be as ſerious a miſchief to his neighbour, as the money gained can poſſibly be a benefit to himſelf. It is paſt a queſtion, that he who thus turns his amuſement into his buſineſs, loſes the dignity of a man of honour, and puts himſelf upon a level with the moſt avaricious and uſurious merchant.

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Though I was far from having digeſted a ſpecific plan of enriching myſelf by theſe diſcreditable means, yet the very tumult of my thoughts operated ſtrongly to lead me once more to the gaming-table. I was in no humour to buſy myſelf with my own thoughts; the calmneſs of literary diſcuſſion, and the poliſhed interchange of wit, which had lately ſo much delighted me, had now no attraction for my heart; the turbulence of a ſcene of high play alone had power to diſtract my attention from the ſtorm within. I won a ſecond time. I felt the rapidity and intenſeneſs of my contemplations ſtill further accelerated. I will not over again detail what they were. Suffice it to ſay, that my hopes became more ardent, my conception of the neceſſity of this reſource more impreſſive, and my alarm leſt this laſt expedient ſhould fail me more tormenting.

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The next time I loſt half as much as the ſum of my winnings. I then proceeded for ſeveral days in a nearly regular alternation of gain and loſs. This, as ſoon as the fact unavoidably forced itſelf upon my mind, only ſerved to render my thoughts more deſperate. No, exclaimed I, it was not for this that I entered upon ſo tormenting a purſuit. It was not for this that I deſerted the learned ſocieties which were lately my delight, and committed myſelf to a ſea of diſquiet and anxiety. I came not here like a boy for amuſement; or, like one who has been bred in the lap of ignorance and wealth, to ſeek a relief from the burthen of exiſtence, and to find a ſtimulus to animate my torpid ſpirits. Am I then to be for ever baffled? Am I to cultivate a tract of land, which is to preſent me nothing in return but unvaried barrenneſs? Am I continually to wind up

my paſſions, and new-ſtring my attention in vain? Am I a mere inſtrument to be played upon by endleſs hopes and fears and tormenting wiſhes? Am I to be the ſport of events, the fool of promiſe, always agitated with near-approaching good, yet always deluded?

This frame of mind led me on inſenſibly to the moſt extravagant adventures. It threw me in the firſt place into the hands of notorious gamblers. Men of real property ſhrunk from the ſtakes I propoſed, as, though they were in ſome degree infected with the venom of gaming, their infection was not ſo deep as mine, nor with my deſperation of thought. The players with whom I engaged, were for the moſt part well known to every one but myſelf, not to be able to pay the ſums they played for, if they loſt; nay, this fact might be ſaid in ſome ſenſe to be known to me as well as the reſt, though

I obſti-

I obſtinately ſteeled myſelf againſt the recollection of it. One evening, I won of one of theſe perſons a very large ſum, for which I ſuffered him to play with me upon honour. The conſequence was ſimple. The next morning he took his departure from Paris, and I heard of him no more.

Before this however the tide of ſucceſs had ſet ſtrongly againſt me. I had ſuſtained ſome ſerious viciſſitudes; and, while I was playing with the wretch I have juſt mentioned, my eagerneſs increaſed as my good luck began, and I flattered myſelf that I ſhould now avenge myſelf of fortune for ſome of her late unkindneſſes. My anguiſh,—why ſhould I call the thing by a diſproportionate and trivial appellation?—my agony—was by ſo much the greater, when I found that this perſon, the very individual who had already ſtripped me of conſiderable

ſums, had diſappeared, and left me without the ſmalleſt benefit from my imaginary winnings.

No man who has not felt, can poſſibly image to himſelf the tortures of a gameſter, of a gameſter like me, who played for the improvement of my fortune, who played with the recollection of a wife and children dearer to me than the blood that bubbled through the arteries of my heart, who might be ſaid, like the Aſiatic ſavage, to make theſe relations the ſtake for which I threw, who ſaw all my own happineſs and all theirs through the long viſto of life, depending on the turn of a card! Hell is but the chimera of prieſts, to bubble idiots and cowards. What have they invented, to come into competition with what I felt! Their alternate interchange of flames and ice, is but a feeble image of the eternal varieties of hope and fear. All bodily racks

racks and torments are nothing compared with certain ſtates of the human mind. The gameſter would be the moſt pitiable, if he were not the moſt deſpicable, creature that exiſts. Arrange ten bits of painted paper in a certain order, and he is ready to go wild with the extravagance of his joy. He is only reſtrained by ſome remains of ſhame from dancing about the room, and diſplaying the vileneſs of his ſpirit by every ſort of freak and abſurdity. At another time, when his hopes have been gradually worked up into a paroxyſm, an unexpected turn arrives, and he is made the moſt miſerable of men. Never ſhall I ceaſe to recollect the ſenſation I have repeatedly felt, in the inſtantaneous ſinking of the ſpirits, the conſcious fire that ſpread over my viſage, the anger in my eye, the burning dryneſs of my throat, the ſentiment that in a moment was ready to

overwhelm with curſes the cards, the ſtake, my own exiſtence and all mankind. How every malignant and inſufferable paſſion ſeemed to ruſh upon my ſoul! What nights of dreadful ſolitude and deſpair did I repeatedly paſs during the progreſs of my ruin! It was the night of the ſoul! My mind was wrapped in a gloom that could not be pierced! My heart was oppreſſed with a weight, that no power, human or divine, was equal to remove! My eyelids ſeemed to preſs downward with an invincible burthen! My eyeballs were ready to ſtart and crack their ſockets! I lay motionleſs the victim of ineffable horror! The whole endleſs night ſeemed to be filled with one vaſt, appalling, immoveable idea! It was a ſtupour, more inſupportable and tremendous, than the utmoſt whirl of pain, or the fierceſt agony of exquiſite perception!

One

One day that my mind was in a ſtate of exceſſive anguiſh and remorſe (I had already contrived by this infernal means to diſpoſſeſs myſelf of the half of my property), my ſon came unexpectedly into my chamber. For ſome time I had ſcarcely ever ſeen him: ſuch is a gameſter! All the night, while he ſlept, I was engaged in theſe haunts of demons. All the day, while he was awake, and ſtudying with his maſters, or amuſing himſelf, I was in my bed-chamber, endeavouring to court a few broken hours of ſleep. When, notwithſtanding the oppoſition of our habits, I had the opportunity of ſeeing him, I rather ſhunned to uſe, than ſought to embrace it. The ſight of him had a ſavour of bitterneſs in it, that more than balanced all the ſolace of natural affection. It brought before me the image of his mother and his ſiſters; it preſented to my ſoul a

frightful tale of deſerted duties; it was more galling and envenomed than the ſting of ſcorpions.

Starting at the ſound of the opening door, I called out abruptly and with ſome harſhneſs, Who is there? What do you want?

It is I, Sir, replied the boy; it is Charles; come to pay his duty to you!

I do not want you now; you ſhould not come but when you know I am at leiſure; anſwered I ſomewhat diſturbed.

Very well, Sir; very well: I am going. As he ſpoke, his voice ſeemed ſuffocated with tears. He was on the point of ſhutting the door, and leaving me to myſelf.

Charles! ſaid I, not well knowing what it was I intended to do.

He returned.

Come here, my dear boy!

I took

I took his hand, I drew him between my knees, I hid my face in his neck, I ſhook with the violence of my emotion.

Go, go, boy: you perceive I cannot talk to you.

I puſhed him gently from me.

Papa! cried he, I do not like to leave you. I know I am but a boy, and can be but of little uſe to you. If mamma were with you, I would not be troubleſome. I ſhould cry, when I ſaw you were grieved, but I would aſk no queſtions, and would leave you, becauſe you deſired it. I hope you have not had any bad news?

No, my boy, no. Come to me to-morrow, and I will be at leiſure, and will talk a great deal to you.

Ah, papa, to-morrow! Every day that I did not ſee you, I thought it would be to-morrow! And there was one to-morrow, and another to-mor-

row, and ſo many, that it ſeemed as if you had forgotten to ſpeak to me at all.

Why, Charles, you do not doubt my word? I tell you, that to-morrow you ſhall ſee me as long as you pleaſe.

Well, well, I will wait! But do then let it be all day! I will not go to college, and it ſhall be a holiday. Papa, I do not like my leſſons half ſo well as I did, ſince I have neither you nor mamma that I can tell what they are about.

Good bye, Charles! Be a good boy! remember to-morrow! Good bye!

Papa! now I am ſure you look a good deal better than you did at firſt. Let me tell you ſomething about the leſſon I read this morning. It was a ſtory of Zaleucus the Locrian, who put out one of his own eyes, that he might preſerve eye-ſight to his ſon.

This artleſs ſtory, thus innocently intro-

introduced, cut me to the ſoul. I ſtarted in my chair, and hid my face upon the table.

Papa, what is the matter? Indeed you frighten me!

Zaleucus was a father! What then am I?

Yes, Zaleucus was very good indeed! But, do you know, his ſon was very naughty. It was his diſobedience and wickedneſs, that made him liable to ſuch a puniſhment. I would not for the world be like Zaleucus's ſon. I hope, papa, you will never ſuffer from my wilfulneſs. You ſhall not, papa, indeed, indeed!

I caught the boy in my arms. No, you are very good! you are too good! I cannot bear it!

Well, papa, I wiſh I were able to ſhow you that I love you, as well as ever Zaleucus loved his ſon!

I was melted with the ingenuouſneſs of the boy's expreſſion. I quitted him. I paced up and down the room. Suddenly as if by a paroxyſm of inſanity, I ſeized my child by the arm, I ſeated myſelf, I drew him towards me, I put my eye upon him.

Boy, how dare you talk to me of Zaleucus? Do you mean to inſinuate a reproach? Do I not diſcharge a father's duty? If I do not, know, urchin, I will not be inſulted by my child!

The boy was aſtoniſhed. He burſt into tears, and was ſilent.

I was moved by his evident diſtreſs. No, child, you have no father. I am afraid you have not. You do not know my baſeneſs. You do not know that I am the deadlieſt foe you have in the world.

Dear papa, do not talk thus! Do not I know that you are the beſt of men? Do not I love you and mamma

better

better than every body elſe put together?

Well, Charles, cried I, endeavouring to compoſe myſelf, we will talk no more now. Did not I tell you, you ſhould not come to me, but when you knew it was a proper time? I hope you will never have reaſon to hate me.

I never will hate you, papa, do to me what you will!

He ſaw I wiſhed to be alone, and left me.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

IN the evening of the ſame day, my beloved Marguerite arrived unexpectedly at Paris. In the beginning of our ſeparation, I had been to the laſt degree punctual in my letters. I had no pleaſure ſo great, as retiring to my cloſet, and pouring out my ſoul to the moſt adorable of women. By degrees I relaxed in punctuality. Ordinary occupations, however cloſely purſued, have a method in them, that eaſily combines with regularity in points of an incidental nature. But gaming, when purſued with avidity, ſubverts all order, and forces every avocation from the place aſſigned it. When my inſane project of ſupplying the inadequateneſs of my fortune by this expedient began

began to produce an effect exactly oppoſite, I could not, but with the extremeſt difficulty, ſtring my mind to write to the miſtreſs of my ſoul. I endeavoured not to think, with diſtinctneſs and attention, of the perſons whoſe happineſs was moſt nearly involved with mine. I ſaid to myſelf, Yet another venture muſt be tried; fortune ſhall change the animoſity with which ſhe has lately purſued me; I will repair the breaches that have been ſuſtained; and I ſhall then return with tenfold avidity to ſubjects that at preſent I dare not fix my mind upon. My letters were accordingly ſhort, unfrequent and unſatisfactory; and thoſe of Marguerite diſcovered increaſing anguiſh, perturbation and anxiety. What a change in the minds of both had the lapſe of a few months produced! Not that my attachment had ſuffered the diminution of a ſingle particle;

ticle; but that attachment, which had lately been the ſource of our mutual felicity, was now fraught only with diſtreſs. My mind was filled with horrors; and Marguerite expected from me an encouragement and conſolation in abſence, which, alas, I had it not in my power to give!

I had now continued in Paris for a time vaſtly greater than I had originally propoſed. After having remained more than ten days without receiving one word of intelligence, a letter of mine was delivered to Marguerite, more ſhort, myſterious and diſtreſſing to her feelings, than any that had preceded. The ten-days ſilence, from me who at firſt had never miſſed an opportunity of pouring out my ſoul to her, and contributing to her pleaſure, was exquiſitely painful. There is ſcarcely any thing that produces ſuch a ſickneſs of the heart, as the repeated prorogation

tion of hope. But, when the letter arrived that had been ſo anxiouſly looked for, when the hand-writing of the ſuperſcription was recogniſed, when the letter was treaſured up for the impatiently deſired moment of ſolitude, that the ſacred emotions of the heart might ſuffer no interruption, and when it at laſt appeared ſo cold, ſo ominous, ſo withering to the buds of affection, the determination of Marguerite was ſpeedily formed. The relations that bound us together were of too mighty a value, to be diſpenſed of to be trifled with. She felt them as the very cords of exiſtence. For ten years ſhe had known no ſolace that was diſconnected from my idea, no care but of our own happineſs and that of our offspring. Benevolent ſhe was almoſt beyond human example, and intereſted for the welfare of all ſhe knew; but theſe were brief and mutable

ble concerns; they were not incorporated with the ſtamina of her exiſtence. I was the whole world to her; ſhe had no idea of ſatisfaction without me. Her firmneſs had been ſufficiently tried by the interpoſal of ſeparation and abſence. How was ſhe to interpret the obſcurity that had now ariſen? Had I forgotten my family and my wife? Had I been corrupted and debauched by that Paris, the effects of which upon my character her father had ſo deeply apprehended? Had I, in contempt of every thing ſacred, entered into ſome new attachment? Had the attractions of ſome new beauty in the metropolis, made me indifferent to the virtue of my children, and the life of their mother? Perhaps the length of our attachment had infected me with ſatiety, and the inconſtancy of my temper had been rouſed by the charms of novelty. Perhaps the certainty of her kindneſs and regard had no longer

allurements

allurements for me; and I might be excited to the purſuit of another by the pleaſures of hope combined with uncertainty, and of a coyneſs, that ſeemed to promiſe compliance hereafter, even while it pronounced a preſent denial. Theſe were the images that haunted her mind; they engendered all the wildneſs, and all the torments, of a delirious paroxyſm; ſhe reſolved that no time ſhould be ſacrificed to needleſs uncertainty, and that no effort of hers ſhould be unexerted to prevent the miſchief ſhe feared.

It was evening when ſhe arrived. I was upon the point of repairing to that ſcene of nightly reſort, the ſource of all my guilt and all my miſeries. I enquired of my ſon's valet, where he was, and how he had been in the courſe of the day. He was gone to bed: he had appeared unuſually ſad, ſometimes in tears; and, while he was undreſſing, had

had ſighed deeply two or three times. While I was collecting this account in my own apartment, the gates of the hotel opened, and a number of horſemen entered the court-yard. I was ſomewhat ſurpriſed; becauſe, though I was accuſtomed to ſee much company, few of my acquaintance viſited me at ſo late an hour, except on the evenings appropriated to receive them. I croſſed the ſaloon to enquire. One of the ſervants exclaimed, It is Bernardin's voice; it muſt be my miſtreſs that is come!

Nothing could be further from my mind than the thought of her arrival. I flew through the paſſage; I was on the ſpot, at the moment that the ſervant prepared to conduct his miſtreſs from the litter; I received Marguerite in my arms, and led her into the houſe. If I had expected her arrival, I ſhould infallibly have met her at this moment

with

with anxiety and confuſion; I ſhould have gone round the circle of my thoughts, and ſhould not have had confidence to encounter the beam of her eye. But the event was ſo unexpected as to drive all other ideas from my mind; and, in conſequence, I enjoyed ſeveral minutes,—ages, rather let me ſay,—of the ſincereſt tranſport. I kiſſed the miſtreſs of my ſoul with extacy; I gazed upon all her well known lineaments and features; I liſtened to the pleaſing melody of her voice; I was intoxicated with delight. Upon occaſions like this, it ſeems as if every former joy that had marked the various periods of intercourſe, diſtilled its very ſpirit and eſſence, to compoſe a draught, ten times more delicious and refined than had ever before been taſted. Our meeting was like awaking from the dead; it was the emancipation of the weary captive, who exchanges

changes the dungeon's gloom for the luſtre of the morning, and who feels a celeſtial exhilaration of heart, the very memory of which had been inſenſibly wearing away from his treacherous brain. All my ſenſes partook of the rapture. Marguerite ſeemed to ſhed ambroſial odours round her; her touch was thrilling; her lips were nectar; her figure was like that of a deſcended deity!

Her pleaſure was not leſs than mine. It is indeed abſurd, it may be termed profanation, to talk of ſolitary pleaſure. No ſenſation ordinarily diſtinguiſhed by that epithet, can endure the teſt of a moment's inſpection, when compared with a ſocial enjoyment. It is then only that a man is truly pleaſed, when pulſe replies to pulſe, when the eyes diſcourſe eloquently to each other, when in reſponſive tones and words the ſoul is communicated. Pleaſure,

in

in ſuch examples, conſiſts in this, the unaccuſtomed perception that exiſtence has gained a duplication of itſelf (for, in ſuch examples, the two beings become one), the ſelf-approbation that accompanies our unbounded deſire for the gratification of another, the ſelf-complacence that reſults from the diſtinguiſhing preference beſtowed upon us, the harmony of ſentiment, and union of ſoul. Altogether, we are conſcious of a ſober, a chaſte and a dignified intoxication, an elevation of ſpirit, that does not bereave the mind of itſelf, and that endures long enough for us to analyſe and ſavour the cauſes of our joy.

For ſome time we reſted on a ſopha, each filled and occupied with the obſervation of the other. My eyes aſſured Marguerite of the conſtancy of my affection; my kiſſes were thoſe of chaſte, undivided, entire attachment.

Our

Our words were inſignificant and idle, the broken and incoherent phraſes of a happineſs that could not be ſilent. At length Marguerite exclaimed, It is enough; my fears are vaniſhed; I have no queſtions to aſk, no doubts to remove. Yet why, my Reginald, did you ſuffer thoſe doubts to gather, thoſe fears to accumulate? Surely you knew the ſingleneſs of my affection! How many painful days and hours might you have ſaved me, almoſt by a word!

Forgive me, my love, replied I! Waſte not the golden hour of meeting in recrimination! Feeling, as your angelic goodneſs now makes me feel, I wonder at myſelf, that I could for one moment have conſented to ſeparation; that I could have thought any thing but this, exiſtence; or that, having experienced the joys that you have beſtowed, I could loſe all image of the paſt, and, dwelling in a deſert, imagine it paradiſe!

Recrimi-

Recrimination! rejoined Marguerite. No, my love; you make me too happy, to leave room for any thing but gratitude and affection! Forgive me, Reginald, if I pretend that, in meeting you thus, I find myſelf your ſuperior in happineſs and love. You only awake from lethargy, forgetfulneſs of yourſelf and—of me; but I awake from anguiſh, a ſeparation, that I deſired not at firſt, and of which I hourly wiſhed to ſee an end, from doubts that would intrude, and refuſed to be expelled, from the inceſſant contemplation and regret of a felicity, once poſſeſſed, but poſſeſſed no longer! Melancholy ideas, gloomy prognoſtics, overſpread my ſleepleſs nights, and bedewed my pillow with tears! This it is, that, at laſt, has driven me away from my family and daughters, reſolved to obtain the certainty of deſpair, or the diſperſion of my fears! Have I

known all this, and think you that I do not enjoy with rapture this bliſsful moment?

While we were thus converſing, Charles entered the room. He was not yet aſleep when his mother arrived; he heard her voice; and haſtened to put on his clothes, that he might ruſh into her arms. The pleaſure Marguerite had conceived from our meeting, and the affectionate ſerenity that had taken poſſeſſion of her ſoul, infuſed double ardour into the embraces ſhe beſtowed on her ſon. He gazed earneſtly in her face; he kiſſed her with fervency; but was ſilent.

Why, Charles! ſaid ſhe, what is the matter with you? Are not you glad to ſee me?

That I am, mamma! So glad, that I do not know what to do with myſelf! I was afraid I never ſhould have been glad again!

Pooh,

Pooh, boy! what do you mean? You were not mother-ſick, were you?

Yes, indeed, I was ſick, ſick at heart! Not that I am a coward! I think that I could have been ſatisfied to have been without either my father or you for a little while. But papa is ſo altered, you cannot think! He never ſmiles and looks happy; and, when I ſee him, inſtead of making me joyful, as it uſed to do, it makes me ſad!

Dear Reginald! replied the mother, looking at me; is it poſſible that, while my heart was haunted with fear and ſuſpicions, ſeparation alone ſhould have had ſuch an effect on you?

I dare ſay it was that! interpoſed the boy. I could not make papa ſmile, all I could do: but, now you are come, he will ſoon be well! How much he muſt love you, mamma?

The artleſs prattle of my ſon ſtruck anguiſh to my ſoul, and awakened a whole train of tormenting thoughts. Alas! thought I, can it indeed be love, that thus contrives againſt the peace of its object? Would to God, my child! that my thoughts were as ſimple and pure as thy innocent boſom!

And yet, added the boy, as if recollecting himſelf, if he could not ſee you, ſure that was no reaſon for him to avoid me? He ſeemed to be as much afraid of me, as I have ſeen ſome of my play-fellows of a ſnake! Indeed, mamma, it was a ſad thing that, when I wanted him to kiſs me and preſs me to his boſom, he ſeemed to ſhrink away from me! There now! it was juſt ſo, as he looks now, that papa uſed to frown upon me, I cannot tell how often! Now is not that ugly, mamma?

I could

I could no longer govern the tumult of my thoughts. Peace, urchin! cried I. Why did you come to mar the tranſport of our meeting? Juſt now, Marguerite, I forgot myſelf, and was happy! Now all the villain riſes in my ſoul!

My wife was ſo aſtoniſhed at the perturbation of my manner, and at the words I uttered, that ſhe was ſcarcely able to articulate. Reginald! in broken accents ſhe exclaimed—my love!—my huſband!

No matter! ſaid I. It ſhall yet be well! My heart aſſures me, it ſhall! —Be not diſturbed, my love! I will never cauſe you a moment's anguiſh! I would ſooner die a thouſand deaths! —Forget the odious thoughts that poor Charles has excited in me ſo unſeaſonably! They were mere idle words! Depend upon it they were!

While I was ſpeaking, Marguerite hid her face upon the ſopha. I took her hand, and by my careſſes endeavoured to ſoothe and compoſe her. At length, turning to me:

Reginald! ſaid ſhe, in a voice of anguiſh, Do you then endeavour to hide from me the real ſtate of your thoughts? Was the joy that attended our meeting, periſhable and deceitful? After ten years of unbounded affection and confidence, am I denied to be the partner of your boſom?

No, Marguerite, no! this was but the thought of a moment! By to-morrow's dawn it ſhall have no exiſtence in my boſom. Why ſhould I torment you with what ſo ſoon ſhall have no exiſtence to myſelf? Meanwhile, be aſſured, my love (inſtead of ſuffering diminution) is more full, more fervent and entire, than it ever was!

At

At this inſtant my mind experienced an extraordinary impreſſion. Inſtead of being weaned, by the preſence of this admirable woman, from my paſſion for gaming, it became ſtronger than ever. If Charles had not entered at the critical moment he did, I ſhould have remained with Marguerite, and, amidſt the ſo long untaſted ſolace of love, have, at leaſt for this night, forgotten my cares. But that occurrence had overturned every thing, had laid naked the wounds of my boſom, and awakened conceptions that refuſed to be laid to ſleep again. The arms of my wife, that were about to embrace me, ſuddenly became to me a neſt of ſcorpions. I could as ſoon have reſted and enjoyed myſelf upon the top of Veſuvius, when it flamed. New as I was to this ſpecies of anguiſh, tranquilly and full of virtuous contentment as I had hitherto paſſed the years of

my married ſtate, the pangs of a guilty conſcience I was wholly unable to bear. I roſe from my ſeat, and was upon the point of quitting the room.

Marguerite perceived by my manner that there was ſomething extraordinary paſſing in my mind. Where are you going, Reginald? ſaid ſhe.

I anſwered with a ſlight nod.—Not far, I replied, attempting an air of apathy and unconcern.

She was not ſatisfied. You are not going out? She enquired.

I returned to where I had been ſitting. My love, I was going out at the moment of your arrival. It is neceſſary, I aſſure you. I hope I ſhall ſoon be back. I am ſorry I am obliged to leave you. Compoſe yourſelf. You are in want of reſt, and had better go to bed.

Stop, Reginald! Afford me a minute's leiſure before you depart!

Leave

Leave us, Charles! Good night, my dear boy! Kiſs me; remember that your mother is now in the ſame houſe with you; and ſleep in peace.

The boy quitted the room.

Reginald! ſaid the mother, I have no deſire to control your deſires, or be a ſpy upon your actions. But your conduct ſeems ſo extraordinary in this inſtance, as to diſpenſe me from the obſervation of common rules. I have always been a complying wife; I have never ſet myſelf in contradiction to your will; I appeal to yourſelf for the truth of this. I deſpiſe however thoſe delicacies, an adherence to which would entail upon us the ſacrifice of all that is moſt valuable in human life. Can I ſhut my ears upon the myſterious expreſſions which Charles's complaints have extorted from you? Can I be inſenſible to the extraordinary purpoſe you declare of leaving me, when I have

yet been ſcarcely half an hour under the roof with you? Before Charles came in, you ſeem to have entertained no ſuch deſign.

My love, replied I, how ſeriouſly you comment upon the moſt inſignificant incident! Is it extraordinary that your unexpected arrival ſhould at firſt have made me forget an engagement that I now recollect?

St. Leon, anſwered my wife, before you indulge in ſurpriſe at my earneſtneſs, recollect the circumſtances that immediately preceded it. Through ſucceſſive weeks I have waited for ſome ſatisfactory and agreeable intelligence from you. I had a right before this to have expected your return. Uncertainty and a thouſand fearful apprehenſions have at length driven me from my home, and brought me to Paris. I am come here for ſatisfaction to my doubts, and peace to my anxious heart.

heart. Wonder not therefore, if you find ſomething more earneſt and determined in my proceedings now, than upon ordinary occaſions. Give me, I conjure you, give me eaſe and relief, if you are able! If not, at leaſt allow me this conſolation, to know the worſt!

Be pacified, Marguerite! I rejoined. I am grieved, Heaven knows how deeply grieved, to have occaſioned you a moment's pain. But, ſince you lay ſo much ſtreſs upon this circumſtance, depend upon it, I will give up the buſineſs I was going about, and ſtay with you.

This conceſſion, voluntary and ſincere, produced an effect that I had not foreſeen. Marguerite gazed for a moment in my face, and then threw herſelf upon my neck.

Forgive me, my beloved huſband! ſhe cried. You indeed make me aſhamed of myſelf. I feel myſelf inexcuſable. I feel that I have been brooding over

imaginary evils, and creating the miſery that corroded my heart. How inexpreſſibly you riſe my ſuperior! But I will conquer my weakneſs. I inſiſt upon your going to the engagement you have made, and will henceforth place the moſt entire confidence in your prudence and honour.

Every word of this ſpeech was a dagger to my heart. What were my feelings, while this admirable woman was taking ſhame to herſelf for her ſuſpicions, and pouring out her ſoul in commendation of my integrity! I looked inward, and found every thing there the reverſe of her apprehenſion, a ſcene of deſolation and remorſe. I embraced her in ſilence. My heart panted upon her boſom, and ſeemed burſting with a ſecret that it was death to reveal. I ought, in return to her generoſity, to have given up my feigned engagement, and devoted this night at leaſt

leaſt to conſole and pacify her. But I could not, and I dared not. The wound of my boſom was opened, and would not be cloſed. The more I loved her for her confidence, the leſs I could endure myſelf in her preſence. To play the hypocrite for ſo many hours, to aſſume a face of tranquillity and joy, while all within was tumult and horror, was a taſk too mighty for human powers to execute. I accepted of Marguerite's permiſſion, and left her. Even in the ſhort interval before I quitted the houſe, my carriage was near to betraying me. I could perceive her watchful of my countenance, as if again ſuſpicious that ſome fatal ſecret lurked in my mind. She ſaid nothing further upon the ſubject however, and I preſently eſcaped the inquiſition of her eye.

It is ſcarcely neceſſary to deſcribe the ſtate of my mind as I paſſed along the

the ſtreets. It is ſufficient to ſay that every thing I had felt before from the paſſion of gaming, was trivial to the ſenſations that now occupied me. Now firſt it ſtood confeſſed before me, a demon that poiſoned all my joys, that changed the tranſport of a meeting with the adored of my ſoul into anguiſh, that drove me forth from her yet untaſted charms a ſolitary wanderer on the face of the earth. My buſy ſoul drew forth at length the picture of what this encounter would have been, if it had been ſanctified with the ſtamp of conſcious innocence. At one moment I felt myſelf the moſt accurſed of mankind; I believed that he who could find, as I did, barrenneſs and blaſting in the choiceſt of heaven's bleſſings, muſt be miſerable beyond precedent or hope. Shortly after however, I reviewed again the image of my poiſon, and found in it the promiſe of a cure.

a cure. The more deſperate my caſe appeared to me, with the greater inſanity of expectation did I aſſure myſelf that this one night ſhould retrieve all my misfortunes. In giving to it this deſtination indeed, I ſhould afflict the gentle boſom of my wife but too probably with ſome hours of uneaſineſs. But the event would richly repay her for ſo tranſitory a ſuffering. I would then open my whole mind to her. I would practiſe no more reſerves; I ſhould no longer be driven to the refuge of a vile hypocriſy. I would bid farewel to the frowns and the careſſes of fortune. I would require of her no further kindneſſes. If I were incapable myſelf of a rigid economy, I would commit implicitly to Marguerite the diſpoſal of my income, whom I knew to be every way qualified for the office. With theſe reflec-

reflections I nerved my mind to the moſt deciſive adventures.

Why ſhould I enter into a long detail of the incidents of this criſis? Soon, though not immediately, I began to loſe conſiderable ſums. I brought with me in the firſt inſtance a penetrating eye, a collected mind, an intellect prepared for unintermitted exertion. Misfortune ſubverted all this. My eye grew wild, my ſoul tempeſtuous, my thoughts incoherent and diſtracted. I was incapable of any thing judicious; but I was determined to perſevere. I played till morning, nor could the light of morning induce me to deſiſt. The ſetting ſun of that day beheld me a beggar!

There is a degree of miſery, which, as it admits of no deſcription, ſo does it leave no diſtinct traces in the memory. It ſeems as if the weakneſs of the human mind alike incapacitated it

to

to ſupport the delirium of joy, and the extremity of ſorrow. Of what immediately ſucceeded the period to which I have conducted my narrative, I have no recollection, but a horror beyond all names of horror, wild, inexplicable, unintelligible. Let no one however imagine that the temporary deſertion of the ſoul is any alleviation of its miſery. The mind that ſinks under its ſuffering, does not by that conduct ſhake off its burthen. Rather, ten thouſand times rather, would I endure all the calamities that have ever yet received a name, the ſenſations and hiſtory of which are capable of being delineated, than ſuſtain that which has no words by which to expreſs itſelf, and the conception of which muſt be truſted ſolely to the faculties and ſympathy of the reader. Where is the cold and inapprehenſive ſpirit that talks of madneſs as a refuge

from

from ſorrow? Oh, dull and unconceiving beyond all belief! I cannot ſpeak of every ſpecies of madneſs; but I alſo have been mad! This I know, that there is a vacancy of ſoul, where all appears buried in ſtupidity, and ſcarcely deſerves the name of thought, that is more intolerable than the bittereſt reflections. This I know, that there is an incoherence, in which the mind ſeems to wander without rudder and pilot, that laughs to ſcorn the ſuperſtitious fictions of future puniſhments invented by deſigning prieſts. Oh, how many ſleepleſs days and weeks did I endure! the thoughts frantic, the tongue raving! While we can ſtill adhere, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, to the method of miſery, there is a ſort of nameleſs complacency that lurks under all that we can endure. We are ſtill conſcious that we are men; we wonder at and admire our powers

of

of being miſerable. But, when the maſts and tackle of the intellectual veſſel are all ſwept away, then is the true ſadneſs. We have no conſciouſneſs to ſuſtain us, no ſentiment of dignity, no ſecret admiration of what we are, ſtill clinging to our hearts.

All this I venture to affirm, with the full recollection of what I ſuffered when reſtored to my ſenſes, preſent to my mind.

When the account was cloſed, and the loſs of my laſt ſtake had finiſhed the ſcene, I roſe, and, quitting the fatal ſpot where theſe tranſactions had paſſed, entered the ſtreet, with a heart oppreſſed, and a burſting head. My eyes glared, but I ſaw nothing, and could think of nothing. It was already nearly dark; and the day which had been tempeſtuous, was ſucceeded by a heavy and ſettled rain. I wandered for ſome time, not knowing whither

whither I went. My pace which had at firſt been ſlow, gradually increaſed, and I traverſed the whole city with a hurried and impatient ſtep. The ſtreets which had contained few perſons at firſt, gradually loſt thoſe few. I was almoſt alone. I ſaw occaſionally ragged and houſeleſs miſery ſhrinking under the cover of a miſerable ſhed; I ſaw the midnight robber, watching for his prey, and ready to ſtart upon the unwary paſſenger. From me he fled; there was ſomething in my air that impelled even deſperate violation to ſhrink from the encounter. I continued this inceſſant, unmeaning exertion for hours. At length, by an accidental glance of the eye, I found myſelf at the gate of my own hotel. Heedleſs of what it was I did, I entered; and, as nature was now completely exhauſted within me, ſunk down in a ſort of inſenſibility at the foot of the grand ſtair-caſe.

This

This ſtupour after a conſiderable interval gradually ſubſided. I opened my eyes, and ſaw various figures flitting about me; but ſeemed to myſelf equally incapable of collecting my thoughts, and of ſpeech. My underſtanding indeed ſhortly became clearer, but an inſuperable reluctance to voluntary exertion hung upon me. I explained myſelf only in monoſyllables; a ſort of inſtinctive terror of diſcloſing what had paſſed, to the admirable woman I had ſacrificed, maintained in me this perpetual reſerve. For ſeveral days together I ſat from morning till night in one immoveable poſture, nor was any thing of force enough to awaken me to exertion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

IT was not long before the unhappy partner of my fortunes was informed of what had paſſed. The wretches who had ſtripped me of my all, ſoon made their appearance to claim what was no longer mine. What would have been their reception, if I had ſufficiently poſſeſſed myſelf to parley with them on the ſubject, I am unable to determine. I could not have preſerved the wreck of my property from their graſp but at the expence of an indelible ſtain upon my honour; yet my deſperation would probably have led me to a conduct equally extravagant and uſeleſs. In the condition in which I was, the whole direction of the buſineſs devolved upon Marguerite;

rite; and never did human creature demean herſelf with greater magnanimity and propriety. She ſaw at once that ſhe could not reſiſt their claims but at the expence of my reputation; for herſelf ſhe valued not riches, and had no dread of poverty; and, thus circumſtanced, ſhe had the courage herſelf to bring to me the papers they offered, the object of which I ſcarcely underſtood, and to cauſe me to annex that ſignature which was to ſtrip her and her children of all earthly fortune. Her purpoſe was, as ſoon as this buſineſs was over, to cauſe us to quit France, and retire into ſome ſcene of virtuous obſcurity. But ſhe would not leave behind her for the laſt deſcendants of the illuſtrious counts of St. Leon any avoidable diſgrace. Her mode of reaſoning upon the ſubject was extremely ſimple. Obſcurity ſhe regarded as no misfortune; and eminent

nent ſituation, where it fairly preſented itſelf, as a reſponſibility it would be baſe to ſhrink from: ignominy alone ſhe conſidered as the proper theme of abhorrence. For the ficklenefs and inconſtancy of fortune it is impoſſible to anſwer; by one of thoſe reverſes in which ſhe appears to delight, ſhe might yet reſtore us to the luſtre of our former condition; but, if the name of St. Leon was henceforth to diſappear from the annals of France, ſhe was deſirous at leaſt, as far as depended on her, that it ſhould expire, like the far-famed bird of Arabia, in the midſt of perfumes.

When the whole ſituation of Marguerite is taken into conſideration, the reader, like myſelf, will probably ſtand aſtoniſhed at the fortitude of her conduct. She had come to Paris, unable any longer to tranquilliſe the agitation of her mind, and exhauſted with

with fears, ſuſpicions and alarms. When ſhe arrived, ſhe experienced indeed one deluſive moment of tranſport and joy. But that was ſoon over. It was ſucceeded by reflections and conjectures reſpecting the myſteriouſneſs of my behaviour; it was ſucceeded by my unexpected departure, and the hourly expectation of my return. After the lapſe of a night and a day, I returned indeed, but in what a condition? Drenched with rain, trembling with inanition, ſpeechleſs and alone. Scarcely had ſhe received notice of my arrival, and come forward to meet me, than ſhe ſaw me fall, motionleſs and inſenſible, at her feet. She watched my recovery, and hung with indeſcribable expectation over my couch. She was only called away by the wretches who came to advance their accurſed claims, and to viſit her with the intelligence of our ruin, as with

a thunderbolt. Already enfeebled and alarmed by all the preceding circumſtances, they ſpoke with no conſideration to her weakneſs, they ſtooped to no qualifications and palliatives, but diſcloſed the whole in the moſt abrupt and ſhocking manner. Any other woman would have ſunk under this accumulation of ill. Marguerite only borrowed vigour from her ſituation, and roſe in proportion to the preſſure of the calamity. She took her reſolution at once, and anſwered them in the moſt firm and deciſive language.

The period of inactivity and ſtupour that at firſt ſeized me, was ſucceeded by a period of frenzy. It was in this condition that Marguerite conducted me and my children to an obſcure retreat in the canton of Soleure in the republic of Switzerland. Cheapneſs was the firſt object; for the moſt miſerable pittance was all ſhe had ſaved

from

from the wreck of our fortune. She had not choſen for beauty of ſituation, or magnificence of proſpects. The ſhock her mind had ſuſtained was not ſo great as to deſtroy her activity and fortitude, but it left her little leiſure for the wantonneſs of ſtudied indulgencies. The ſcene was remote and ſomewhat ſterile. She conceived that, when I recovered my ſenſes, an event which ſhe did not ceaſe to promiſe herſelf, ſolitude would be moſt grateful, at leaſt to the firſt ſtage of my returning reaſon.

Hither then it was that ſhe led me, our ſon and three daughters. Immediately upon our arrival ſhe purchaſed a ſmall and obſcure, but neat cottage, and attired herſelf and her children in habits ſimilar to thoſe of the neighbouring peaſants. My paternal eſtates, as well as thoſe which had fallen to me by marriage, had all been ſwallowed

up in the gulph which my accurſed conduct had prepared. Marguerite made a general ſale of our moveables, our ornaments, and even our clothes. A few books, guided by the attachment to literature which had always attended me, were all that ſhe ſaved from the wreck. A conſiderable part of the ſum thus produced was appropriated by my creditors. Marguerite had the prudence and ſkill to ſatisfy them all, and was contented to retain that only which remained when their demands were diſcharged. This was the laſt dictate of her pride and the high-born integrity of her nature, at the time that ſhe thus departed a voluntary exile from her native country. Two ſervants accompanied us in our flight, whoſe attachment was ſo great, that even if their attendance had not been neceſſary, it would have been found ſomewhat difficult to ſhake them off.

off. Marguerite however was governed by the ſtricteſt principles of economy; and, whatever the ſtruggle might have been with the importunity of humble affection in diſmiſſing theſe laſt remains of our profuſe and luxurious houſhold, ſhe would have thought herſelf obliged to proceed even to this extreme, if judicious parſimony had demanded it from her. But it did not. Our youngeſt daughter was at this time only twelve months old, and it would have been ſcarcely poſſible for the mother, however reſolute in her exertions, to have diſcharged the cares due to ſuch a family, at a time when the father of it was ſuffering under ſo heavy an affliction. One female ſervant ſhe retained to aſſiſt her in theſe offices. She could not diſpenſe herſelf from a very aſſiduous attention to me. She could never otherwiſe have been ſatisfied, that

every thing was done that ought to be done, that every tenderneſs was exerciſed that might be demanded by my humiliating ſituation, or that ſufficient ſagacity and ſkill were employed in watching and encouraging the gleams of returning reaſon. The violence of my paroxyſms however was frequently ſuch as to render a manual force greater than hers, neceſſary to prevent me from effecting ſome deſperate miſchief. Peter, a truſty ſervant, nearly of my own age, and who had attended upon my perſon almoſt from infancy, was retained by Marguerite for this purpoſe. I was greatly indebted for the recovery which ſpeedily followed, to the affectionate anxiety and enlightened care of this incomparable woman. It is inconceivable to thoſe who have never been led to a practical examination of the ſubject, how much may be effected in this reſpect by an attachment

ment ever on the watch, and an underſtanding judicious to combine, where hired attendance would ſleep, and the coarſeneſs of a blunt inſenſibility would irritate, nay perhaps mortally injure.

It is ſcarcely poſſible to conceive of a wife more intereſting and admirable than Marguerite appeared upon the preſent occaſion. Fallen at once from the higheſt rank to the loweſt poverty, ſhe did not allow herſelf a mean and pitiful regret. No reverſe could be more complete and abrupt, but ſhe did not ſink under it. She proved in the moſt convincing manner, that her elevation was not the offspring of wealth or rank, but was properly her own. She gave a grace, even a luſtre, to poverty, which it can only receive from the emanations of a cultivated mind. Her children were reconciled and encouraged by her example, and ſoon

forgot thoſe indulgences which had not yet had time to emaſculate their ſpirits. The deplorable ſituation to which the father of the family was reduced, was far from leading her to ceaſe from her efforts in the bitterneſs of deſpair. She determined for the preſent to be both a father and a mother to her children. She looked forward with confidence to my ſpeedy recovery. Though I was the author of all her calamities, ſhe did not permit this conſideration to ſubtract from the purity of her affection, or the tenderneſs of her anxiety. She reſolved that no word or look of hers ſhould ever reproach me with my miſconduct. She had been accuſtomed to deſire rank, and affluence, and indulgence for her children; that her ſon might run the career of glory which his forefathers ran, and that her daughters might unite their fates with what was

moſt

moſt illuſtrious and honourable in their native country. But, if ſhe were diſappointed in this, ſhe was determined, as far as it ſhould be in her power, to give them virtue and chearfulneſs and content, a mind, that ſhould find reſources within itſelf, and call forth regard and eſteem from the reſt of mankind.

My recovery was fitful and precarious, ſometimes appearing to be rapidly on the advance, and at others to threaten a total relapſe. Among the expedients that Marguerite employed to re-excite the ſlumbering ſpark of reaſon, was that of paternal affection. Ever on the watch for a favourable opportunity, ſhe ſometimes brought to me her own little nameſake, who, though only twelve months old, did not fail to diſcover unequivocal marks of that playfulneſs and gaiety which made ſo conſiderable a part of her con-

ſtitutional character. Her innocent ſmiles, her frolic and careleſs laughter, produced a reſponſive vibration that reached to my inmoſt heart. They were not unfrequently, powerful enough, to check the career of my fury, or to raiſe me from the loweſt pitch of deſpondence. Julia wept for me, and Louiſa endeavoured to copy the offices of kindneſs ſhe was accuſtomed to ſee her mother perform: Charles, who conceived more fully than the reſt the nature of my indiſpoſition, was upon all occaſions ſolicitous to be admitted into my preſence, and attended me for the moſt part with ſpeechleſs anxiety, while his watchful, gliſtening eye uttered volumes, without the aſſiſtance of words. His mother at length yielded to his importunity, and he became eſtabliſhed the regular aſſiſtant of Peter in the care of my perſon. The reſtleſſneſs and impetuoſity he had hither-

to

to manifeſted, ſeemed upon this occaſion entirely to ſubſide; hour after hour he willingly continued ſhut up in my chamber, eager for every opportunity of uſefulneſs, and gratified with that complacence with which the human mind never fails to be impreſſed, when it regards its actions as beneficent, or approves its temper as compaſſionate.

The reſtoration of my health was greatly retarded by the melancholy impreſſions which neceſſarily offered themſelves to my mind, when recollection reſumed her ſeat. It was fortunate for me that this ſort of retroſpection appears not to be the firſt thing that occurs after a paroxyſm of inſanity. When the tide of incoherent ideas ſubſides, the ſoul is left in a ſtate of exhauſtion, and ſeems, by a ſort of inſtinct, to ſhun the influx of tumultuous emotions, and to dwell upon

ſuch feelings as are mild, tranquil and reſtorative. Once however, when I was nearly recovered, the thought of what I had been, and the recollection of what I was, violently ſuggeſting themſelves to my mind, brought on a relapſe attended with more alarming and diſcouraging ſymptoms than my original alienation. At that moment Marguerite was for the firſt time irreſiſtibly ſtruck with the conception that mine was an incurable lunacy; and, as ſhe afterwards aſſured me, at no period down to that inſtant, had ſhe felt herſelf ſo truly inconſolable. But even a ſentiment of the laſt deſpair was incapable of ſuperſeding the active beneficence of Marguerite. Her aſſiduities, ſo far as related to this fatal calamity, were at length crowned with ſucceſs. Her gloomy prognoſtics were not realiſed, and the diſtemper of my underſtanding quitted me for ever.

Wretched

Wretched however, as I have already remarked, beyond all common notions of wretchedneſs, were my thoughts, when my ſoul returned to its proper bias, and I fully ſurveyed the nature of my preſent ſituation. Marguerite, who, by her ſagacity and patience, had recovered me from a ſtate of the moſt dreadful diſeaſe, now exerted herſelf to effect the more arduous taſk of reconciling me to myſelf. She aſſured me that ſhe forgave me from her inmoſt heart; nay, that ſhe was thankful to providence, which, in the midſt of what the world calls great calamities, had preſerved to her what ſhe moſt valued, my affection, entire. She contraſted what had been the ſubject of her apprehenſions before ſhe came to Paris, with what had proved to be the ſtate of the caſe afterwards. She averred, that the worſt that had happened was trivial and tolerable, compared

compared with the notion that her fears had delineated. She had feared to find my heart alienated from her, and herſelf a widowed mother to orphan children. She dreaded leſt I ſhould have proved myſelf worthleſs in her eyes, leſt I ſhould have been found to have committed to oblivion the moſt ſacred of all duties, and, for the gratification of a low and contemptible caprice, ſacrificed all pretenſions to honour and character. For that indeed her heart would have bled; againſt that all the pride ſhe derived from her anceſtry and my own would have revolted; that would have produced a revulſion of her frame, ſnapping the chain of all her habits, and putting a violent cloſe upon all the ſentiments ſhe had moſt fondly nouriſhed. She dreaded indeed that ſhe ſhould not have ſurvived it. But the miſtake I had committed was of a very different

different nature. I had neither forgotten that I was a huſband nor a father; I had only made an injudicious and unfortunate choice of the way of diſcharging what was due to theſe characters. What had paſſed was incapable of impeaching either the conſtancy of my affections, or the integrity of my principles. She forgave me, and it was incumbent upon me to forgive myſelf.

She aſſured me that poverty, in her apprehenſion, was a very ſlight evil, and ſhe appealed to my own underſtanding for the ſoundneſs of her judgment. She bid me look round upon the peaſantry of the neighbourhood, upon a footing with whom we were now placed, and aſk my own heart whether they were not happy. One diſadvantage indeed they were ſubjected to, the abſence of cultivation and learning. She could never bring herſelf

herſelf to believe that ignorance was a benefit; ſhe ſaw the contrary of this practically illuſtrated in her own caſe, in mine, and in that of all the perſons to whom through life ſhe had been moſt ardently attached. She wiſhed her children to attain intellectual refinement, poſſeſs fully the attributes of a rational nature, and to be as far removed as poſſible from the condition of ſtocks and ſtones, by accumulating a magazine of thoughts, and by a rich and cultivated ſenſibility. But the want of fortune did not in our caſe, as in the caſe of ſo many others, ſhut them out from this advantage: it was in our own power to beſtow it upon them.

It was the part of a reaſonable man, ſhe told me, not to waſte his ſtrength in uſeleſs regrets for what was paſt, and had already eluded his graſp; but to advert to the bleſſings he had ſtill in

in poſſeſſion. If we did this in our preſent ſituation, we ſhould find every reaſon for contentment and joy. Our pleaſure in each other, and the conſtancy of our attachment, was unaſſailed and unimpaired. Where were there two married perſons, ſhe would venture to aſk, who had more reaſon to applaud their connection, or to whom their connection was pregnant with ſo various gratifications? From ourſelves, we had only to turn our thoughts to our children; and we were ſurely as ſingularly fortunate in this reſpect, as in each other. Charles, who had always been the ſubject of our pride, had lately exhibited ſuch an example of patient ſympathy and filial affection, as perhaps had never been equalled in a child ſo young. The ſenſibility of Julia, the underſtanding of Louiſa, and the vivacity of Marguerite, were all of them ſo many

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growing ſources of inexhauſtible delight. Our children were intelligent, affectionate and virtuous. Thus circumſtanced, ſhe intreated me not to indulge that jaundice of the imagination, which ſhould create to itſelf a ſentiment of melancholy and diſcontent in the midſt of this terreſtrial paradiſe.

Moſt virtuous of women, now perhaps the pureſt and the brighteſt among the ſaints in heaven! why was I deaf to the ſoundneſs of your exhortations, and the generoſity of your ſentiments? Deaf indeed I was! A prey to the deepeſt dejection, they appeared to me the offspring of miſapprehenſion and paradox! Suppoſing in the mean time that they were reaſonable and juſt in the mouth of her who uttered them, I felt them as totally foreign to my own ſituation. The language, as they were, of innocence, it was not wonderful that

that to an innocent heart they ſpoke tranquillity and peace. Marguerite looked round upon the preſent ruſticity and plainneſs of our condition, and every thing that ſhe ſaw talked to her of her merit and her worth. If we were reduced, ſhe was in no way accountable for that reduction; it had been the teſt of her magnanimity, her patience, and the immutableneſs of her virtue. She ſmiled at the aſſaults of adverſity, and felt a merit in her ſmiles. How different was my ſituation! Every thing that I ſaw reminded me of my guilt, and upbraided me with crimes that it was hell to recollect. My own garb, and that of my wife and children, the deſertion in which we lived, the ſimple benches, the unhewn rafters, the naked walls, all told me what it was I had done, and were ſo many echoes to my conſcience, repeating, without intermiſ-

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ſion and without end, its heart-breaking reproaches. Sleep was almoſt a ſtranger to me; theſe inceſſant monitors confounded my ſenſes in a degree ſcarcely ſhort of madneſs itſelf. It is the property of vice to convert every thing that ſhould be conſolation, into an additional ſource of anguiſh. The beauty, the capacity and the virtue of my children, the affection with which they regarded me, the patience and attentiveneſs and forbearance of their excellent mother, were all ſo many aggravations of the miſchief I had perpetrated. I could almoſt have wiſhed to have been the object of their taunts and execration. I could have wiſhed to have been diſengaged from the dearеſt charities of our nature, and to have borne the weight of my crimes alone. It would have been a relief to me, if my children had been covered with the moſt loathſome diſeaſes, deformed and monſtrous.

monſtrous. It would have been a relief to me, if they had been abortive in underſtanding, and odious in propenſities, if their hearts had teemed with every vice, and every day had marked them the predeſtined victims of infamy. The guilt of having ſtripped them of every external faculty would then have ſet light upon me. But thus to have ruined the moſt lovely family perhaps that exiſted on the face of the earth, the moſt exemplary of women, and children in whom I diſtinctly marked the bud of every excellence and every virtue, was a conduct that I could never forgive even to myſelf. Oh, Damville, Damville! beſt of men! trueſt of friends! why didſt thou put thy truſt in ſuch a wretch as I am! Hadſt thou no preſentiment of the fatal conſequences? Wert thou empowered to commit thy only child and all her poſſible offspring to ſo dreadful

dreadful a riſk? Indeed it was not well done! It was meant in kindneſs; but it was the cruelleſt miſchief that could have been inflicted on me. I was not a creature qualified for ſuch dear and tender connections. I was deſtined by nature to wander a ſolitary outcaſt on the face of the earth. For that only, that fearful miſery, was I fitted. Why, miſguided, misjudging man! didſt thou not leave me to my fate? Even that would have been leſs dreadful than what I have experienced!— Wretch that I am! Why do I reproach my beſt benefactor? No, let me turn the whole current of my invective upon myſelf! Damville was actuated by the nobleſt and moſt generous ſentiment that ever entered the human mind. What a return then have I made, and to what a benefit!

All the previous habits of my mind had taught me to feel my preſent circumſtances

cumſtances with the utmoſt acuteneſs. Marguerite, the generous Marguerite, ſtood, with a ſoul almoſt indifferent, between the oppoſite ideas of riches and poverty. Not ſo her huſband. I had been formed by every accident of my life, to the love of ſplendour. High, heroic feats, and not the tranquillity of rural retirement, or the purſuits of a character profeſſedly literary, had been the food of my imagination, ever ſince the faculty of imagination was unfolded in my mind. The field of the cloth of gold, the ſiege and the battle of Pavia, were for ever preſent to my recollection. Francis the Firſt, Bayard and Bourbon eternally formed the ſubject of my viſions and reveries. Theſe propenſities had indeed degenerated into an infantine taſte for magnificence and expence; but the roots did not embrace their ſoil the leſs forcibly, be-

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cauſe the branches were preſſed down and diverted from their genuine perpendicular. That from a lord, deſcended from ſome of the moſt illuſtrious houſes in France, and myſelf amply imbued with the high and diſdainful ſpirit incident to my rank, I ſhould become a peaſant, was itſelf a ſufficient degradation. But I call the heavens to witneſs that I could have endured this with patience, if I had endured it alone. I ſhould have regarded it as the juſt retribution of my follies, and ſubmitted with the moſt exemplary reſignation. But I could not with an equal mind behold my wife and children involved in my puniſhment. I turned my eyes upon the partner of my life, and recalled with genuine anguiſh the magnificence to which ſhe was accuſtomed, and the hopes to which ſhe was born. I looked upon my children, the fruit of my loins, and

once

once the pride of my heart, and recollected that they were paupers, ruſtics, exiles. I could foreſee no return to rank, but for them and their poſterity an interminable ſucceſſion of obſcurity and meanneſs. A real parent can ſupport the calamity of perſonal degradation, but he cannot bear to witneſs and anticipate this corruption of his blood. At ſome times I honoured Marguerite for her equanimity. At others I almoſt deſpiſed her for this integrity of her virtues. I accuſed her in my heart of being deſtitute of the ſpark of true nobility. Her patience I conſidered as little leſs than meanneſs and vulgarity of ſpirit. It would have become her better, I thought, like me, to have curſed her fate, and the author of that fate; like me, to have ſpurned indignant at the ſlavery to which we were condemned; to have refuſed to be pacified, and to have waſted the laſt dregs of exiſtence in impatience and regret.

could act that which had involved us in this dire reverſe; but I could not encounter the conſequences of my act.

The ſtate of my mind was in the utmoſt degree dejected and forlorn. I carried an arrow in my heart, which the kindneſs of my wife and children proved inadequate to extract, and the ranklings of which time itſelf had not the power to aſſuage. The wound was not mortal; but, like the wound of Philoctetes, poiſoned with the blood of the Lernean Hydra, I dragged it about with me from year to year, and it rendered my exiſtence a galling burthen hardly to be ſupported. A great portion of my time was paſſed in a deep and mournful ſilence, which all the ſoothings that were addreſſed to me, could not prevail on me to break. Not that in this ſilence there was the leaſt particle of ill-humour or ſullenneſs. It was a mild and paſſive ſituation

tion of the mind; affectionate, as far as it was any thing, to the perſons around me; but it was a ſpecies of diſability; my ſoul had not force enough to give motion to the organs of ſpeech, or ſcarcely to raiſe a finger. My eye only, and that only for a moment at a time, pleaded for forbearance and pardon. I ſeemed like a man in that ſpecies of diſtemper, in which the patient ſuffers a waſting of the bones, and at length preſents to us the ſhadow, without the powers of a human body.

This was at ſome times my condition. But my ſtupour would at others ſuddenly ſubſide. Mechanically, and in a moment, as it were, I ſhook off my ſupineneſs, and ſought the mountains. The wildneſs of an untamed and ſavage ſcene beſt accorded with the temper of my mind. I ſprung from cliff to cliff among the points of the rock. I ruſhed down precipices

that to my ſobered ſenſe appeared in a manner perpendicular, and only preſerved my life, with a ſort of inborn and unelective care, by catching at the roots and ſhrubs which occaſionally broke the ſteepneſs of the deſcent. I hung over the tops of rocks ſtill more fearful in their declivities, and courted the giddineſs and whirl of ſpirit which ſuch ſpectacles are accuſtomed to produce. I could not reſolve to die: death had too many charms to ſuit the ſelf-condemnation that purſued me. I found a horrible ſatisfaction in determining to live and to avenge upon myſelf the guilt I had incurred. I was far from imagining that the evils I had yet ſuffered, were a mere ſport and oſtentation of miſery, compared with thoſe that were in reſerve for me.

The ſtate of mind I am here deſcribing, was not madneſs, nor ſuch as could be miſtaken for madneſs. I never

ver forgot myſelf, and what I was. I was never in that delirium of thought, in which the patient is reſtleſs and active without knowing what it is that he does, and from which, when rouſed, he ſuddenly ſtarts, ſhakes off the dream that engaged him, and ſtands aſtoniſhed at himſelf. Mine was a rage, guided and methodiſed by the diſcipline of deſpair. I burſt into no fits of raving; I attempted no injury to any one. Marguerite therefore could not reconcile herſelf to the placing me under any reſtraint. I frequently returned home, with my clothes ſmeared with the ſoil, and torn by the briars. But my family ſoon became accuſtomed to my returning in perſonal ſafety; and therefore, whatever was the uneaſineſs my wife felt from my excurſions, ſhe preferred the enduring it, to the idea of impoſing on me any ſpecies of violence.

The ſtate of my family preſented a ſingular ſort of contraſt with that of its head. Marguerite was certainly not inſenſible to the oppoſition between her former and her preſent mode of life; but ſhe ſubmitted to the change with ſuch an unaffected chearfulneſs and compoſure as might have extorted admiration from malignity itſelf. She would perhaps have diſmiſſed from her thoughts all retroſpect to our former grandeur, had not the dejection and deſpair that ſeemed to have taken poſſeſſion of my mind, forcibly and continually recalled it to her memory. For my ſufferings I am well aſſured ſhe felt the trueſt ſympathy; but there was one conſideration attending them that imperiouſly compelled her to taſk her fortitude. They deprived me of the ability of in any degree providing for and ſuperintending my family; it became therefore incumbent upon her

to

to exert herſelf for the welfare of all. Had we never fallen under this aſtoniſhing reverſe, I might have ſpent my whole life in daily intercourſe with this admirable woman, without becoming acquainted with half the treaſures of her mind. She was my ſteward; and from the reſult of her own reflections made the moſt judicious diſpoſition of my property. She was my phyſician; not by adminiſtering medicines to my body, but by carefully ſtudying and exerting herſelf to remove the diſtemper of my mind. Unfortunately no diſtempers are ſo obſtinate as mental ones; yet, had my diſtemper had any lighter ſource than an upbraiding conſcience, I am perſuaded the wiſdom of Marguerite would have baniſhed it. She was the inſtructor of my children; her daughters felt no want of a governeſs, and I am even ready to doubt whether the leſſons of his mother did

not amply ſupply to Charles his loſs of an education in the univerſity of Paris. The love of order, the activity, the induſtry, the chearfulneſs of, let me ſay, this illuſtrious matron, became contagious to all the inhabitants of my roof. Once and again have I ſtolen a glance at them, or viewed them from a diſtance buſied, ſometimes gravely, ſometimes gaily, in the plain, and have whiſpered to my burſting heart, How miſerable am I! how happy they! So inſurmountable is the barrier that divides innocence from guilt! They may breathe the ſame air; they may dwell under the ſame roof; they may be of one family and one blood; they may aſſociate with each other every day and every hour; but they can never aſſimilate, never have any genuine contact. Is there a happier family than mine in all the vallies of this far-famed republic? Is there a family more

more virtuous, or more cultivated with all the refinements that conduce to the true dignity of man? I, I only am its burthen, and its ſtain! The pleaſure with which I am ſurrounded on every ſide, finds a repellent quality in my heart that will not ſuffer its approach. To whatever is connected with me I communicate misfortune. Whenever I make my appearance, thoſe countenances that at all other times ſpoke contentment and hilarity, fall into ſadneſs. Like a peſtilential wind, I appear to breathe blaſt to the fruits of nature, and ſicklineſs to its aſpect.

Marguerite expoſtulated with me in the moſt ſoothing manner upon the obſtinacy of my malady. My Reginald! my love! ſaid ſhe, ceaſe to be unhappy, or to reproach yourſelf! You were raſh in the experiment you made upon the reſources of your family. But have

you done us miſchief, or have you conferred a benefit? I more than half incline to the latter opinion. Let us at length diſmiſs artificial taſtes, and idle and viſionary purſuits, that do not flow in a direct line from any of the genuine principles of our nature! Here we are ſurrounded with ſources of happineſs. Here we may live in true patriarchal ſimplicity. What is chivalry, what is military proweſs and glory? Believe me, they are the paſſions of a mind depraved, that with ambitious refinement ſeeks to be wiſe beyond the dictates of ſentiment or reaſon! There is no happineſs ſo ſolid, or ſo perfect, as that which diſdains theſe refinements. You, like me, are fond of the luxuriant and romantic ſcenes of nature. Here we are placed in the midſt of them. How idle it would be, to wiſh to change our arbours, our verdant lanes and thickets,

thickets, for vaulted roofs, and gloomy halls, and maſſy plate? Alas, Reginald! it is I fear too true, that the ſplendour in which we lately lived, has its baſis in oppreſſion; and that the ſuperfluities of the rich, are a boon extorted from the hunger and miſery of the poor! Here we ſee a peaſantry more peaceful and leſs oppreſſed, than perhaps any other tract of the earth can exhibit. They are erect and independent, at once friendly and fearleſs. Is not this a refreſhing ſpectacle? I now begin practically to perceive that the cultivators of the fields and the vineyards, are my brethren and my ſiſters; and my heart bounds with joy, as I feel my relations to ſociety multiply. How cumbrous is magnificence? The moderate man is the only free. He who reduces all beneath him to a ſtate of ſervitude, becomes himſelf the ſlave of his eſtabliſhment, and of all

his domeſtics. To diminiſh the caſes in which the aſſiſtance of others is felt abſolutely neceſſary, is the only genuine road to independence. We can now move wherever we pleaſe without waiting the leiſure of others. Our ſimple repaſts require no tedious preparation, and do not impriſon us in ſaloons and eating rooms. Yet we partake of them with a more genuine appetite, and riſe from them more truly refreſhed, than from the moſt ſumptuous feaſt. I prepare for my meal by induſtry and exerciſe; and, when it is over, amuſe myſelf with my children in the fields and the ſhade.—Though I love the ſight of the peaſants, I would not be a peaſant. I would have a larger ſtock of ideas, and a wider field of activity. I love the ſight of peaſants only for their acceſſories or by compariſon. They are comparatively more ſecure than any other

other large maſſes of men, and the ſcenes in the midſt of which they are placed are delightful to ſenſe. But I would not ſacrifice in prone oblivion the beſt characteriſtics of my nature. I put in my claim for refinements and luxuries; but they are the refinements and purifying of intellect, and the luxuries of uncoſtly, ſimple taſte. I would incite the whole world, if I knew how to do it, to put in a ſimilar claim. I would improve my mind; I would enlarge my underſtanding; I would contribute to the inſtruction of all connected with me, and to the maſs of human knowledge. The pleaſures I would purſue and diſſeminate, though not dependent on a large property, are ſuch as could not be underſtood by the ruſtic and the ſavage.—Our ſon, bred in theſe fields indeed, will probably never become a *preux chevalier*, or figure in the roll of military heroes. But

But he may become ſomething happier and better. He may improve his mind, and cultivate his taſte. He may be the counſellor and protector of his ſiſters. He may be the ornament of the diſtrict in which he reſides. He may inſtitute in his adoptive country new defences for liberty, new ſyſtems of public benefit, and new improvements of life. There is no character more truly admirable than the patriot-yeoman, who unites with the utmoſt ſimplicity of garb and manners, an underſtanding fraught with information and ſentiment, and a heart burning with the love of mankind. Such were Fabricius and Regulus among the ancients, and ſuch was Tell, the founder of the Helvetic liberty. For my part, I am inclined to be thankful, that this unexpected reverſe in our circumſtances, has made me acquainted with new pleaſures, and opened to my mind

mind an invaluable leſſon. If you could but be prevailed on to enter into our pleaſures, to diſmiſs idle reproaches and pernicious propenſities, our happineſs would then be complete.

The expoſtulations of Marguerite often excited my attention, often my reſpect, and ſometimes produced a ſort of imperfect conviction. But the conviction was tranſient, and the feelings I have already deſcribed as properly my own, returned, when the freſh and vivid impreſſion of what I had heard was gone. It was in vain that I heard the praiſes of ſimplicity and innocence. I was well pleaſed to ſee thoſe who were neareſt to me, not affecting contentment, but really contented with theſe things. But I could not be contented for them. The leſſons of my education had left too deep an impreſſion. I could myſelf have ſurrendered my claim to admiration and homage,

as

as a penance for my misdeeds: but I could not figure to myself a genuine satisfaction unaccompanied by these accessories; and this satisfaction I obstinately and impatiently coveted for those I loved.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

WHILE I murmured in bitterneſs of ſoul at the lowneſs to which they were reduced, a ſtill heavier calamity impended over them, as if in vengeance againſt the fantaſtic refinements of diſtreſs over which I brooded.

I was wandering, as I had often done, with a gloomy and rebellious ſpirit, among the rocks, a few miles diſtant from the place of our habitation. It was the middle of ſummer. The weather had been remarkably fine; but I diſdained to allow the gratifications which ariſe from a pure atmoſphere and a ſerene ſky, to find entrance in my ſoul. My excurſions had for ſome days been inceſſant; and the ſun, which matured the corn and blackened the

the grapes around, had imbrowned my viſage, and boiled in my blood. I drank in fierceneſs and deſperation from the fervour of his beams. One night, as in ſullen mood I watched his ſetting from a point of the rock, I perceived the clearneſs of the day ſubſiding in a threatening evening. The clouds gathered in the weſt, and, as night approached, were overſpread with a deep dye of the fierceſt crimſon. The wind roſe, and, during the hours of darkneſs, its roarings were hollow and tempeſtuous.

In the morning the clouds were hurried rapidly along, and the air was changed from a long ſeries of ſultrineſs to a nipping cold. This change of the atmoſphere I diſregarded, and purſued my rambles. A little before noon however, the air ſuddenly grew ſo dark, as to produce a ſenſation perfectly tremendous. I felt as if the darkeſt night had never exceeded it. The impetuous motion

motion to which I had been impelled, partly by the fever in my blood, and partly by the turbulence of the ſeaſon, was ſuſpended. Mechanically I looked round me for ſhelter. But I could ill diſtinguiſh the objects that were near me, when a flaſh of lightning, blue and ſulphureous, came directly in my face, with a brightneſs that threatened to extinguiſh the organ of viſion. The thunder that followed was of a length and loudneſs to admit of no compariſon from any object with which I am acquainted. The burſts were ſo frequent as almoſt to confound themſelves with each other. At preſent, I thought only of myſelf; and the recent habits of my mind were not calculated to make me peculiarly acceſſible to fear. I ſtood awe-ſtruck; but rather with the awe that inheres to a cultivated imagination, than that which conſiſts in apprehenſion. I

ſeemed

ſeemed ready to mount amidſt the clouds, and penetrate the veil with which nature conceals her operations. I would have plunged into the receſſes in which the ſtorm was engendered, and bared my boſom to the ſtreaming fire. Meanwhile my thoughts were ſolemniſed and fixed by obſerving the diverſified dance of the lightnings upon the points of the rocks, contraſting as they did in the ſtrongeſt manner with the darkneſs in which the reſt of the ſcene was enveloped. This added contention of the elements, did not however ſuſpend the raging of the wind. Preſently a ſtorm of mingled hail and rain poured from the clouds, and was driven with inconceivable impetuoſity. The hail-ſtones were of ſo aſtoniſhing a magnitude, that, before I was aware, I was beaten by them to the ground. Not daring to attempt to riſe again, I ſimply endeavoured to place

place myſelf in ſuch a manner as might beſt protect me from their violence. I therefore remained proſtrate, liſtening to the force with which they ſtruck upon the earth, and feeling the rebound of their blows from different parts of my body.

In about twenty minutes the ſhower abated, and in half an hour was entirely over. When I began to move, I was extremely ſurpriſed at the ſenſation of ſoreneſs I felt in every part of me. I raiſed myſelf upon my elbow, and ſaw the hail-ſtones, in ſome places lying in heaps like hillocks of ice, while in others they had ploughed up the ſurface, and buried themſelves in the earth. As I looked further, I perceived immenſe trees torn from their roots, and thrown to a great diſtance upon the declivity. To the noiſe which they made in their deſcent, which muſt have been aſtoniſhingly great,

great, I had been at the time inſenſible. Such were the marks which the tempeſt had left upon the mountains. In the plain it was ſtill worſe. I could perceive the ſoil, for long ſpaces together, converted into a moraſs, the ſtanding corn beaten down and buried in the mud, the vines torn into a thouſand pieces, the fruit-trees demoliſhed, and even in ſome places the animals themſelves, lambs, ſheep and cows, ſtrewing the fields with their mangled carcaſes. The whole hopes of the year over which my eyes had glanced a few minutes before, for it was near the period of harveſt, were converted into the moſt barren and dreary ſcene that any quarter of the globe ever witneſſed. I was mounted upon a conſiderable eminence, and had an extenſive proſpect of this horrible devaſtation.

As I ſtood gazing in mute aſtoniſhment, ſuddenly a fear came over me that

that ſtruck dampneſs to my very heart. What was the ſituation of my own family and their little remaining property, amidſt this dreadful ruin? I was in a ſituation, where, though I nearly faced our habitation, a point of the rock intercepted it from my ſight. The obſtacle was but a ſmall one, yet it would require a conſiderable circuit to overcome. I flew along the path, with a ſpeed that ſcarcely permitted me to breathe. When I had paſſed the upper rock, the whole extenſive ſcene opened upon me in an inſtant. What were my ſenſations, when I perceived that the devaſtation had been even more complete here, than on the ſide where I firſt viewed it! My own cottage in particular, which that very morning had contained, and I hoped continued to contain, all that was moſt dear to my heart, ſeemed to ſtand an entire

entire ſolitude in the midſt of an immenſe ſwamp.

Marguerite, whoſe idea, upon our retreat into Switzerland, had been that of conforming without reſerve to the new ſituation that was allotted us, had immediately expended the whole of what remained from the ſhipwreck of our fortune, in the purchaſe of the cottage in which we dwelt, and a ſmall portion of land around it, ſufficient with economy for the ſupport of our family. Under her direction the hills had been covered with vines, and the fields with corn. She had purchaſed cows to furniſh us with milk, and ſheep with their fleeces, and had formed her eſtabliſhment upon the model of the Swiſs peaſantry in our neighbourhood. Reverting to the ſimplicity of nature, appeared to her like building upon an immoveable baſis, which the claſh of nations could not

not deſtroy, and which was too humble to fear the treachery of courts, or the caprice of artificial refinement.

It was all ſwept away in a moment. Our little property looked as if it had been particularly a mark for the vengeance of heaven, and was more utterly deſtroyed than any of the ſurrounding ſcenes. There was not a tree that remained ſtanding; there was not a hedge or a limit that remained within or around it; chaos had here reſumed his empire, and avenged himſelf of the extraordinary order and beauty it had lately diſplayed.

I was not overwhelmed with this aſtoniſhing ſpectacle. At that moment nature found her way to my heart, and made a man of me. I made light of theſe petty acceſſories of our exiſtence; and the thought of my wife and my children, ſimply as they were in themſelves, filled every avenue of

my heart. For them, and them alone, I was intereſted: it was a queſtion for their lives. To conceive of what they might perſonally have ſuſtained, was a horror that ſeemed to freeze up all the arteries of my heart. I deſcended from the mountain. It was with the greateſt difficulty, and not without many circuitous deviations that I proceeded, ſo much was the ſurface changed, and ſo deep and miry the ſwamps. My terror increaſed, as I paſſed near to the carcaſes of the animals who had fallen victims to this convulſion of the elements. I obſerved with inconceivable alarm that the dead or wounded bodies of ſome human beings, were intermingled with the brute deſtruction. I ſtaid not to enquire whether they were yet in a ſtate to require aſſiſtance; the idea that had taken poſſeſſion of me, left no room for the ſentiment of general humanity.

A little

A little further on I diſtinctly remarked the body of a woman at ſome diſtance from any habitation, who appeared to be dead, deſtroyed by the ſtorm. Near her lay a female infant, apparently about ſix years of age. My attention was involuntarily arreſted; I thought of Louiſa, that ſweet and amiable child, ſo like her admirable mother. The figure was hers; the colour of the robe correſponded to that in which I laſt ſaw her. The child was lying on her face. With all the impatient emotions of a father, I ſtooped down. I turned over the body, that I might identify my child. It was ſtill warm; life had ſcarcely deſerted it. I gazed upon the viſage; it was diſtorted with the agonies of death; but enough to convince me ſtill remained diſcernible; it was not Louiſa!

I can ſcarcely recollect a period through all the ſtrange viciſſitudes of my exiſtence to be compared with this. If I had not felt what I then felt, I could never have conceived it. Human nature is ſo conſtituted, that the higheſt degree of anguiſh, an anguiſh in which the heart ſeems to ſtretch itſelf to take in the mightineſs of its woe, can be felt but for a few inſtants. When the calamity we feared is already arrived, or when the expectation of it is ſo certain as to ſhut out hope, there ſeems to be a principle within us by which we look with miſanthropic compoſure on the ſtate to which we are reduced, and the heart ſullenly contracts and accommodates itſelf to what it moſt abhorred. Our hopes wither; and our pride, our ſelf-complacence, all that taught us to rejoice in exiſtence, wither along with them. But, when hope yet ſtruggles with deſpair,

deſpair, or when the calamity abruptly announces itſelf, then is the true contention, the tempeſt and uproar of the ſoul too vaſt to be endured.

This ſentiment of ineffable wretchedneſs I experienced, when I ſtooped down over the body of the imaginary Louiſa, and when I haſtened to obtain the certainty which was of all things moſt terrible to me. The termination of ſuch a moment of horror, is ſcarcely leſs memorable than its intrinſic greatneſs. In an inſtant the ſoul recovers its balance, and the thought is as if it has never been. I clapped my hands in an extacy at once of joy and aſtoniſhment, ſo ſure did I ſeem to have made myſelf of my misfortune; I quitted the body with an unburthened heart; I flew towards my home, that I might aſcertain whether I was prematurely ſpeaking comfort to my ſpirit.

At length I reached it. I ſaw the happy groupe aſſembled at the door. Marguerite had entertained the ſame terrors for me, with which I had myſelf ſo lately been impreſſed. We flew into each other's arms. She hid her face in my neck, and ſobbed audibly. I embraced each of the children in turn, but Louiſa with the moſt heartfelt delight. Are you ſafe, papa? Are you ſafe, my child? were echoed on every ſide. A ſpectator, unacquainted with what was paſſing in our hearts, would certainly have ſtood aſtoniſhed to ſee the tranſport with which we exulted, ſurrounded as we were with deſolation and ruin.

After an interval however we opened our eyes, and began to ruminate upon the new condition in which we were placed. Marguerite and myſelf watched each other's countenances with anxiety to diſcover what were likely to be

be the feelings of either in this terrible criſis. Be of good heart, my love! ſaid Marguerite. Do not ſuffer the accident which has happened, entirely to overcome you! There was a mixed compaſſion, tenderneſs and anxiety in the tone of voice with which ſhe uttered theſe words, that was inexpreſſibly delightful.

No, Marguerite, replied I, with enthuſiaſtic impetuoſity, I am not caſt down; I never ſhall be caſt down again! Ruin is nothing to me, ſo long as I am ſurrounded with you and our dear children. I have for ſome time been a fool. In the midſt of every real bleſſing, I have faſhioned for myſelf imaginary evils. But my eyes are now opened. How eaſily is the human mind induced to forget thoſe benefits, with which we are conſtantly ſurrounded, and our poſſeſſion of which we regard as ſecure! The feelings of this morning have awaken-

ed me. I am now cured of my folly. I have learned how to value my domeſtic bleſſings as I ought. Having preſerved them, I eſteem myſelf to have loſt nothing. What are gold and jewels and precious utenſils? Mere droſs and dirt! The human face and the human heart, reciprocations of kindneſs and love, and all the nameleſs ſympathies of our nature, theſe are the only objects worth being attached to. What are rank and ſtation, the homage of the multitude and the applauſe of fools? Let me judge for myſelf! The value of a man is in his intrinſic qualities, in that of which power cannot ſtrip him, and which adverſe fortune cannot take away. That for which he is indebted to circumſtances, is mere trapping and tinſel. I ſhould love theſe precious and ingenuous creatures before me better, though in rags, than the children of kings in all the pomp of ornament. I

am proud to be their father. Whatever may be my perſonal faults, the world is my debtor for having been the occaſion of their exiſtence. But they are endeared to me by a better principle than pride. I love them for their qualities. He that loves, and is loved by, a race of pure and virtuous creatures, and that lives continually in the midſt of them, is an idiot, if he does not think himſelf happy. Surrounded as I am now ſurrounded, I feel as irremoveable as the pillars of creation. Nothing that does not ſtrike at their exiſtence, can affect me with terror.

Marguerite viewed me with ſurpriſe and joy. Now indeed, ſaid ſhe, you are the man I took you for, and the man I ſhall henceforth be prouder than ever to call my huſband. The ſorrow in which you lately indulged, was a luxury; and we muſt have done with

luxuries. You will be our protector and our ſupport.

Thus ſaying, ſhe took me by the hand, and motioned me to view with her the devaſtation that had been committed. There was one path I had diſcovered, in which we might proceed ſome way with tolerable eaſe. The ſcene was terrible. We were indeed beggars. A whole province had been deſtroyed. All the corn and the fruits of the earth; moſt of the trees; in many places cattle; in ſome places men. Perſons who had been rich in the morning, ſaw all the produce of their fields annihilated, and were unable even to gueſs by what proceſs fertility was to be re-eſtabliſhed. The comparatively wealthy ſcarcely knew how they were to obtain immediate ſubſiſtence; the humbler claſs, who always live by the expedients of the day, ſaw nothing before them but the

proſpect of periſhing with hunger. We witneſſed in one or two inſtances the anguiſh of their deſpair.

Our proſpect was ſcarcely in any reſpect better than theirs; yet we felt differently. We were more impreſſed with the joy of our perſonal eſcape. As my error reſpecting the value of externals had been uncommonly great, the ſudden revolution of opinion I experienced was equally memorable. The ſurvey indeed that we took of the general diſtreſs ſomewhat ſaddened our hearts; but the ſadneſs it gave, was that of ſobriety, not of dejection.

It was incumbent upon us to make a ſtrict examination into the amount of our property, and our immediate reſources; and in this office I united myſelf with Marguerite, not only with a degree of chearfulneſs and application, the perfect contraſt of my whole conduct ever ſince our arrival in Swit-

zerland, but which greatly exceeded any thing I had ever before exhibited in a buſineſs of this nature. We found that, though all our hopes of a harveſt were annihilated, yet we were not deſtitute of the inſtant means of ſubſiſtence. The reſources we poſſeſſed, whether in money or proviſions, that were our dependence till the period when the new produce ſhould ſupply their place, were uninjured. Our implements of huſbandry remained as before. The land was not impoveriſhed, but had rather derived additional fertility from the effects of the ſtorm. What we had loſt was chiefly the produce of our capital for one year, together with a part of that capital itſelf in the live ſtock that had been deſtroyed. This was a loſs which a certain degree of care and ſcope in our external circumſtances might eaſily have enabled us to ſupply. But the principle

principle of ſupply was denied us. It was with conſiderable difficulty that all the economy of Marguerite had enabled her to ſupport our family eſtabliſhment, while every thing of this kind had gone on proſperouſly. Such a ſhock as the preſent we were totally diſqualified to ſurmount. It compelled us to a complete revolution of our affairs.

Many indeed of our neighbours had ſcarcely any greater advantage in their private affairs than ourſelves. But they poſſeſſed one ſuperiority that proved of the greateſt importance in this conjuncture; they were natives of the ſtate in which they reſided. In the cantons of Switzerland, the deſtruction of the fruits of the earth, occaſioned by inclement ſeaſons and tempeſts, is by no means unfrequent; and it is therefore cuſtomary in plentiful years, to lay up corn in public magazines, that

that the people may not periſh in periods of ſcarcity. Theſe magazines are placed under the inſpection and diſpoſal of the magiſtracy; and the inhabitants looked to them with confidence for the ſupply of their need. No ſtorm however had occurred in the memory of man ſo terrible and ruinous as the preſent; and it became evident that the magazines would prove a reſource too feeble for the extent of the preſent emergency.

The ſtorm had ſpread itſelf over a ſpace of many leagues in circumference, not only in the canton of Soleure, but in the neighbouring cantons, particularly that of Berne. The ſufferers in our own canton only, amounted to ſcarcely leſs than ten thouſand. While the women and children for the moſt part remained at home, the houſes having in general ſuffered little other damage than the deſtruction of their windows,

windows, the fathers of families repaired to the ſeat of government to put in their claims for national relief; and theſe alone formed an immenſe troop, that threatened little leſs than to beſiege the public magazines and the magiſtrates. An accurate inveſtigation was entered into of the loſſes of each, it being the purpoſe of government, as far as its power extended, not only to ſupply the people with the means of immediate ſubſiſtence, but alſo, by diſburſements from the public treaſury, to recruit the ſtock of cattle, and to aſſiſt every one to return, with revived hopes and expectation, to the ſphere of his induſtry. The purpoſe was no doubt benevolent; but in the mean time the unhappy victims found in uncertainty and expectation a real and corroding anguiſh.

I advanced my claim with the reſt, but met with a peremptory refuſal. The

The harſh and rigorous anſwer I received, was, that they had not enough for their own people, and could ſpare nothing to ſtrangers. Upon this occaſion I was compelled to feel what it was to be an alien, and how different the condition in which I was now placed, from that I had filled in my native country. There I had lived in the midſt of a people, to whom the veneration of my anceſtry and my name ſeemed a part of their nature. They had witneſſed for ſeveral years the reſpectable manner in which I lived; the virtues of Marguerite were familiar to them; and they took an intereſt in every thing that concerned us, a ſentiment that confeſſed us at once for kindred and patrons. It was the turn of mind only which is generated by rank, that had compelled us to quit their vicinity; we might have continued in it, if not in affluence, at leaſt

leaſt enjoying the gratifications that ariſe from general affection and reſpect. But here we were beheld with an eye of jealouſy and diſtaſte. We had no prejudice of birth and habit in our favour; indeed, in the reverſe of fortune which had brought us hither, Marguerite had been leſs deſirous of obtruding, than of withdrawing from the public eye, the circumſtance of our rank. We were too recent inmates to have ſecured by any thing of a perſonal nature an advantageous opinion among our neighbours. They ſaw only a miſerable and diſtracted father of a family, and a mother who, in ſpite of the ſimplicity ſhe cultivated, ſufficiently evinced that ſhe had been accuſtomed to a more elevated ſituation. The prepoſſeſſions of mankind are clearly unfavourable to a newcomer, an emigrant who has quitted his former connections and the ſcenes

of

of his youth. They are unavoidably impelled to believe, that his taking up his abode in another country, muſt be owing to a weak and diſcreditable caprice, if it be not owing to ſomething ſtill more diſadvantageous to his character.

The calamity therefore which we had ſuffered in common with moſt of the inhabitants of the province, finally reduced us to the neceſſity of a ſecond emigration. The jealouſy with which we were regarded, daily became more viſible and more threatening. Though, in conſequence of the diſtribution made by order of the ſtate, the price of commodities was not ſo much increaſed as might have been expected, we were conſidered as interlopers upon the portion of the natives; the ſellers could with difficulty be perſuaded to accommodate us, and the byſtanders treated us with murmurs and reviling. While

we

we were deliberating what courſe to purſue in this emergency, certain officers of government one morning entered our habitation, producing an order of the ſenate for our immediate removal out of the territory. It is of the eſſence of coercive regulations, to expel, to impriſon and turn out of priſon, the individuals it is thought proper to control, without any care as to the miſchiefs they may ſuffer, and whether they periſh under or ſurvive the evil inflicted on them. We were accordingly allowed only from ſix in the morning till noon, to prepare for our departure. Our guards indeed offered to permit me to remain three days to wind up my affairs, upon condition that my wife and children were inſtantly removed into another country, as a ſort of hoſtages for my own departure. This indulgence however would have been uſeleſs. In the preſent

ſent ſtate of the country no purchaſer could be found for the little eſtate I poſſeſſed, and, if there could, it muſt doubtleſs have been diſpoſed of to great diſadvantage at ſuch an emergency. I know not how we ſhould have extricated ourſelves out of theſe difficulties, if a member of the ſenate, who, being one of my neareſt neighbours had been ſtruck with admiration of the virtues of Marguerite, and with compaſſion for my family, had not paid me a viſit ſhortly after the arrival of the officers, and generouſly offered to take upon himſelf the care of my property, and to advance me what money might be neceſſary for my emigration. This offer, which at any other time might have been regarded as purely a matter of courſe, under the preſent circumſtances, when capital was ſo neceſſary for the revival of agriculture in the deſolated country,

implied

implied a liberal and diſintereſted ſpirit. I accepted the kindneſs of my neighbour in both its parts, but for the reimburſement of his loan referred him to the French miniſter to the United Cantons, who, under all the circumſtances of the caſe, and taking my eſtate as ſecurity for the money advanced, I thought it reaſonable to believe would attend to my application.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

MY affairs being thus far adjuſted, I took leave of my late habitation, and ſet off with my wife and children the ſame afternoon. In the evening we arrived at Baſle, where we were permitted to remain that night, and the next morning were conducted in form out at the north gate of the city, where our attendants quitted us, with a freſh prohibition under the ſevereſt penalties, if we were found within the enſuing twelve months in any of the territories of the Helvetic republic.

Marguerite and myſelf had already formed our plan. We began with diſmiſſing both our ſervants. An attendant was no longer neceſſary to me, nor a nurſe for the infant. The ſuggeſtion of

of this meaſure originated in myſelf. My temper at this time, as I have already ſaid, underwent a ſtriking change. I was reſolved to be happy; I was reſolved to be active. It was hard to part with perſons ſo long familiar to us, and who appeared rather in the character of humble friends, than domeſtics; but an imperious neceſſity ſeemed to demand it. Let us, ſaid I to Marguerite, increaſe and ſecure our happineſs by diminiſhing our wants. I will be your huſbandman and your labourer; you may depend upon my perſeverance. My education has fitted me to endure hardſhip and fatigue, though the hardſhips then thought of were of a different nature. You have ever delighted in active uſefulneſs; and will not, I know, repine at this accumulation of employment. Let us accommodate ourſelves to our circumſtances. Our children, I perceive,

ceive, are fated to be peaſants, and will therefore be eminently benefited by the example of patience and independence we ſhall ſet before them.

The next object of our plan related to the choice of our future place of reſidence. This originated with Marguerite. She had heard much of the beauty and richneſs of the country bordering on the lake of Conſtance, and ſhe thought that, while we denied ourſelves expenſive pleaſures, or rather while they were placed out of our reach, there would be a propriety in our procuring for ourſelves a ſtock of thoſe pleaſures which would coſt us nothing. This was a refinement beyond me, and ſerves to evince the ſuperiority which Marguerite's virtue and force of mind ſtill retained over mine. The virtue I had ſo recently adopted was a ſtrenuous effort. I rather reſolved to be happy, than could

ſtrictly

ſtrictly be ſaid to be happy. I loved my children indeed with an unfeigned affection. It was with ſincerity that I profeſſed to prefer them to all earthly poſſeſſions. But vanity and oſtentation were habits wrought into my ſoul, and might be ſaid to form part of its eſſence. I could not, but by the force of conſtant recollection, keep them out of my wiſhes and hopes for the future. I could not, like Marguerite, ſuffer my thoughts, as it were, to riot and wanton in the pleaſures of poverty. I could only reconcile myſelf to my fate by a ſort of gloomy firmneſs. The tranquillity I ſeemed to have attained, was an unnatural ſtate of my ſoul, to which it was neceſſary that I ſhould reſolutely hold myſelf down, and from which my thoughts appeared ever upon the alert to eſcape. Bitter experience had at length taught me a hard leſſon, and that leſſon I was de-

termined to practiſe, whatever pangs my reſignation might coſt me.

We proceeded without heſitation in the direction we had reſolved to purſue. Our whole journey exceeded the ſpace of forty leagues in extent, and the expence neceſſarily attendant upon it, (our family, even after its reduction, conſiſting of no leſs than ſix perſons) drained our purſe of a great part of the money which had been ſupplied to us by the benevolent ſenator. But he had agreed to undertake the diſpoſing of the property we were obliged to leave behind us, and in the mean time, if any conſiderable interval occurred before that was accompliſhed, to furniſh us with the ſums that ſhould be neceſſary for our ſubſiſtence. We placed the utmoſt reliance upon his fidelity, and diſmiſſed from our minds all anxiety reſpecting the interval which our baniſhment had

interpoſed

interpoſed between us and the reſources neceſſary for our future ſettlement.

Upon our arrival at Conſtance, we found a letter from our friend; and, though he tranſmitted to us no freſh ſupply, the complexion of his communication was, upon the whole, ſo encouraging as to determine us, with no other delay than that of four days reſt from our journey, to paſs to the other ſide of the lake, and explore for ourſelves a ſituation ſuitable to our deſign. The weſtern bank of the lake, with the exception only of the city of Conſtance, was part of the *pays conquis* of the United Cantons; the eaſtern bank was a territory dependent on the government of that city. It was in this territory that we purpoſed fixing our reſidence; and we truſted that our affairs would ſhortly be put in a train to enable us to take poſſeſſion of the ſpot we ſhould ſelect.

Thus driven once more into flight by the preſſure of misfortune, and compelled to exchange for a land unknown the ſcenes which familiarity might have endeared, or tender recollections have made intereſting, we did not ſink under the weight of our adverſity. This removal was not like our laſt. Switzerland was to none of us endeared like the vales of St. Leon. I was not now goaded and tormented by conſcious guilt in the degree I had then been; Marguerite was not afflicted by the ſpectacle of my miſery. Our preſent change, though it might be denominated a fall, was light in compariſon with the former. The compoſure I had gained was new to me, and had to my own mind all the gloſs of novelty. To my companions it proved contagious; they were aſtoniſhed at my ſerenity, and drew from it an unwonted lightneſs of heart.

Thus

Thus circumſtanced, our tour had its charms for us all, and there are few paſſages of my life that I have felt more agreeably. The lake itſelf is uncommonly beautiful, and its environs are fertile and intereſting. It is ſurrounded with an abundance of towns, villages, country-ſeats and monaſteries, ſufficient to adorn and diverſify the ſcene, but not to exclude the ſweetneſs of a rural ſcenery, or the grand features of nature. We coaſted a conſiderable part of the lake, that we might judge in ſome degree, previous to our landing, which part of the ſhore promiſed beſt to yield us the object we ſought. The autumn was now commencing; the air was liquid and ſweet; the foliage was rich and varied; and the vine-covered hills exhibited a warmth and luxuriance of colouring, that no other object of nature or art is able to cope with. Surrounded with

theſe objects, I ſat in my boat in the midſt of my children; and, as I was but juſt awakened to an obſervation of their worth and my own happineſs, I viewed them with a tranſport that would be ill illuſtrated by being compared with the tranſport of a miſer over his new-recovered treaſure from the bowels of the deep.

Oh, poverty! exclaimed I, with elevated and unconquerable emotion, if theſe are the delights that attend thee, willingly will I reſign the pomp of palaces and the ſplendour of rank to whoever ſhall deem them worth his acceptance! Henceforth I deſire only to dedicate myſelf to the ſimplicity of nature and the genuine ſentiments of the heart. I will enjoy the beauty of ſcenes cultivated by other hands than mine, or that are ſpread out before me by the author of the univerſe. I will ſit in the midſt of my children, and

revel

revel in the luxury of domeſtic affections; pleaſures theſe, that may be incumbered, but cannot be heightened, by all that wealth has in its power to beſtow! Wealth ſerves no other purpoſe than to deprave the ſoul, and adulterate the fountains of genuine delight.

Such was the ſpirit of exultation with which my mind was at this time filled. I am ſenſible that it was only calculated to be tranſitory. I might learn to be contented; I was not formed to be ſatisfied in obſcurity and a low eſtate.

Thus happy and thus amuſed, we ſpent two days in coaſting the lake, landing frequently for the purpoſes either of variety or enquiry, and regularly paſſing the night on ſhore. On the evening of the ſecond day, we were ſtruck with the neat appearance and pleaſing ſituation of a cottage,

which we diſcovered in our rambles about a mile and a half from the lake. We found that it was to be ſold, and it ſeemed preciſely to correſpond with the wiſhes we had formed. It was at a conſiderable diſtance from any populous neighbourhood, the neareſt town being that of Merſpurg, the uſual reſidence of the biſhops of Conſtance, which was diſtant from this ſpot not leſs than three leagues. The cottage was ſituated in a valley, the hills being for the moſt part crowned with rich and verdant foliage, their ſides covered with vineyards and corn, and a clear, tranſparent rivulet murmuring along from eaſt to weſt. In the diſtance a few ſimilar cottages diſcovered themſelves, and in front there was an opening between the hills, juſt wide enough to ſhow us a few ſails as they floated along the now even ſurface of the lake. We approached the cottage, and found

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in it only one perſon, an intereſting girl of nineteen, who had reſided there from her birth, and had been employed for the laſt four years in attendance upon the cloſing ſcene of her mother. Her mother had been dead only a few weeks, and ſhe was upon the point of removing, as ſhe told us, to the houſe of a brother, the beſt creature in the world, who was already married, and had a family of children. While we were talking with her, we perceived a fine boy of about eleven years of age ſkipping along the meadow. He proved to be her nephew, and haſtened to ſay that his father and Mr. Henry were juſt behind, and would be with her in a few minutes. We waited their arrival, and it was eaſy to ſee that Mr. Henry was by no means an indifferent object in the eyes of the beautiful orphan: ſhe had probably conditioned that he ſhould permit her to remain

ſingle, as long as ſhe could be of any uſe to her mother. The lovers were well ſatisfied that the girl's brother ſhould be taken aſide, that I might talk over with him the affair of the cottage. We made a tour of the fields that were part of the property of the deceaſed, and the terms of our intended purchaſe were eaſily adjuſted.

Though we had now accompliſhed the immediate purpoſe of our expedition, yet, as we had found unuſual exhilaration and ſweetneſs in the objects it preſented to us, we came to a reſolution of continuing it ſtill further, and completing the circuit of the lake. We were aware that it would be vain as yet to expect to receive the money requiſite for completing our purchaſe; and, as no pleaſure, merely in the way of relaxation, could be more delightful than that we were now enjoying, ſo was it impoſſible that we could

could fill up our time in a more frugal manner than in this little voyage. Our gratification was not leſs, but more perfect, becauſe it conſiſted of ſimple, inartificial, unbought amuſements. The ſcenes around us were refreſhing and invigorating; they were calculated, temporarily at leaſt, to inſpire gaiety and youth into decrepitude itſelf. Amidſt theſe ſcenes we forgot our ſorrows; they were a kind of ſtream, in which wearineſs and dejection plunged their limbs, and came forth untired and alert. They awakened in the mind all its moſt pleaſing aſſociations. Having already, as we believed, choſen the ſcene of our future reſidence, we buſied ourſelves in imagining all the accompaniments that would grow out of it. We determined that poverty with health would not fail to be attended with its portion of pleaſures. The ſcenes of nature were all our

own; nor could wealth give them a more perfect, or a firmer, appropriation. The affections and charities of habitude and conſanguinity we truſted we ſhould feel uninterrupted; unincumbered with the ceremonies and trappings of life, and in that rural plainneſs which is their genial ſoil.

After a leiſurely and delightful voyage of ſix days, we returned to Conſtance. We expected to have found on our return ſome further intelligence from the beneficent ſenator, but in this we were diſappointed. The imagination however eaſily ſuggeſted to us a variety of circumſtances that might have delayed the buſineſs he had undertaken; and it was no forced inference to ſuppoſe that he deferred writing, becauſe he had nothing important to communicate. At firſt therefore we ſuffered little uneaſineſs from the delay; but, as time proceeded, and the

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ſilence of our protector continued, the affair began to aſſume a more ſerious aſpect. The little ſtock we had brought with us in our exile, was in a rapid progreſs of decay. We had managed it with frugality, though not at firſt with that anxious ſolicitude, the neceſſity of which we now began to apprehend. We had procured for ourſelves two ſmall and inconvenient apartments in an obſcure alley of the city of Conſtance. We were in the act of meditating what ſteps it would be neceſſary to take in this unfortunate emergency, when intelligence was brought us of the ſudden deceaſe of the perſon upon whoſe kindneſs and exertions we depended.

He was ſucceeded in his eſtate by his nephew, a man of whom we had heard ſomething during our reſidence in the neighbourhood, and whoſe habits we underſtood to be diametrically

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the reverſe of his predeceſſor's. In ſhort, he had been repreſented to us as illiberal, moroſe, ſelfiſh and litigious, a man who, having ſuffered in one part of his life the hardſhips of poverty, ſcrupled no means, honourable or otherwiſe, of removing it to the greateſt practicable diſtance. He had already reaped the ſucceſſion ſome weeks, when we heard of the event that put him in poſſeſſion of it; and the letters which I had more than once addreſſed to our protector, had probably fallen into his hands. Theſe circumſtances afforded no favourable augury of the treatment we might expect from him. The firſt thing which ſeemed proper was to write to him, which I accordingly did. I acquainted him with the nature of the tranſaction between myſelf and his uncle, and ſignified how neceſſary it was that we ſhould come to a concluſion as ſpeedily as poſſible.

I repre-

I repreſented to him pathetically the condition to which I was born, and the opulence in which I had paſſed many years of my life, together with the contraſt afforded by the preſent reduced and urgent circumſtances of my family. I intreated him to exert his generoſity and juſtice in behalf of an unfortunate exile, whom untoward events had deprived of the power of doing juſtice to himſelf.

To this letter I received no anſwer. Uncertain as to the cauſe of my correſpondent's ſilence, or even whether my letter had been received, I wrote again. My heart was wrung with this new adverſity. I was forbidden under pain of perpetual impriſonment to return to the territories of the republic, and I had no friend to ſolicit in my behalf. In Conſtance I was utterly a ſtranger. In Switzerland my unfortunate habits of life, the depreſſion and

ſolitude in which I had been merged, deprived me of the opportunity of forming connections. The deceaſed was the only perſon who had been diſpoſed to interfere for me. It was too probable that the ſilence of his ſucceſſor was an indication of the hoſtility of his views. I ſaw nothing before me but the proſpect of my family periſhing with want, deprived of their laſt reſource, exiles and pennyleſs. Thus deſtitute and forlorn, what could we do; to what plan could we have recourſe? We had not ſo much as the means of providing ourſelves with the implements of the humbleſt labour. If we had, could I, under my circumſtances, reſolve upon this? Could I give up the laſt ſlender pittance of my children while there was a chance of recovering it; and, by ſurrendering them to the ſlavery of perpetual labour, ſurrender them to the loweſt degree of

ignorance

ignorance and degradation? No; I ſtill clung to this final hope, and was reſolved to undertake any thing, however deſperate, rather than part with it. Such were my feelings; and, in the new letter which I now diſpatched, I poured out all the anguiſh of my ſoul.

A reply to this letter was at length vouchſafed. The heir of my protector informed me, that he knew nothing of the buſineſs to which I alluded; that he had come into poſſeſſion of the lands I deſcribed, together with the other property of his late uncle, and regarded himſelf as holding them by the ſame tenure; that he found in the accounts of the eſtate a ſum of money advanced to me, which he might with the ſtrictest juſtice regard as a debt, and purſue me for it accordingly. He ſhould be liberal enough however ſo far to give credit to my ſtory, and to conſider

ſider the ſum in queſtion as advanced upon a pledge of land: in that caſe, I might regard myſelf as ſufficiently fortunate, in having obtained even that amount at a time when, but for the humanity or weakneſs of his uncle, my eſtate would not have ſold for a farthing. Meanwhile the forbearance which he proferred, would, he obſerved, depend upon my conduct, and be retracted, if I afforded him cauſe for reſentment. He added, that he deſpiſed my menaces and commands, and that, if I took a ſingle ſtep againſt him, I ſhould find it terminate in my utter ruin.

Nothing could be more profligate than the ſtyle of his letter. But its impotence was equal to its wickedneſs. It was abſurd to threaten to inflict ruin, on a man whom ruin had already overtaken. Before the letter arrived, I had diſburſed the whole ſum I brought with me from Switzerland.

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This entire annihilation of my reſources ſeemed to ſteal on me unperceived. Finding that all reply to my importunity was either refuſed, or deferred to an uncertain period, I would willingly at all riſks have ſought the villain who thus obdurately devoted me and my family to deſtruction, and have endeavoured to obtain juſtice in perſon. But it was now too late. Before I felt the caſe thus deſperate, my finances were ſo far reduced, as to make it impracticable for me to leave my wife and children enough to ſupport them in my abſence, even if I had determined myſelf to ſet out upon this perilous expedition pennyleſs. I reſolved that, if we did periſh, we would periſh together.

Penury was now advancing upon us with ſuch rapid ſtrides, that the loweſt and moſt ſcanty reſources nō longer admitted of neglect. Had a caſe thus deſperate

deſperate been encountered with timely attention, it is not improbable that ſome of the various talents I had acquired in the courſe of my education, would have furniſhed me with a means of ſubſiſtence, not altogether plebeian or incompetent. But, with the uncertainty of my ſituation, and totally unaccuſtomed as I was to regard my perſon or mind as a machine fitted for productive labour, I had not looked to this queſtion, till the urgency of the caſe deprived me of every advantage I might otherwiſe have ſeized. I was glad therefore to have recourſe to menial occupation, and ſought employment under the gardener of the epiſcopal palace, for whoſe ſervice I was ſufficiently qualified by my ten years' retreat in the Bordelois. That I might better adapt myſelf to the painful neceſſity of my ſituation, I previouſly exchanged ſome of my own clothes for garments

garments more ſuitable to the buſineſs I now ſolicited. It was not till I had arrived within a very few days to the end of my reſources, that even this expedient, by a ſort of accident, recurred to my mind. Marguerite, though fully aware of the urgency of the caſe, had, as ſhe afterwards told me, impoſed on herſelf a compulſory ſilence, fearing for the inflamed and irritated frame of my mind, and aware that the courſe of events would ultimately lead me to a point, with which ſhe dreaded to intermeddle. This was for her a trying moment; my lately recovered inſanity obliging her to contemplate in ſilence our growing diſtreſs, and to wait the attack of hunger and want that threatened to deſtroy us, with an apparent tranquillity and chearfulneſs.

For me, ſo entire a revolution had taken place in my ſentiments, that I

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ſpurned with contempt, ſo far as related to myſelf, that pride of rank and romantic gallantry of honour, which had formerly been my idols. I ſubmitted with a ſort of gloomy contentment to the ſituation upon which my deſtiny drove me. I regarded it as the natural reſult of my former miſconduct; and derived a ſentiment of eaſe and relief, from thus expiating, as it were with the ſweat of my brow, the temptations to which I had yielded. Had I been myſelf only reduced thus low, or had the produce of my labour been ſufficient to purchaſe competence for my wife and the means of inſtruction for my family, I can ſafely affirm that I ſhould have found no conſequence ſo direct from my own degradation, as the means of ſilencing the reproaches of conſcience and reconciling me to myſelf. But, when I returned in the evening with the earnings of my day's labour,

labour, and found it incompetent to the procuring for thoſe who depended on me the ſimpleſt means of ſubſiſtence, then indeed my ſenſations were different. My heart died within me. I did not return after the fatigues of the day, which, to me who had not been accuſtomed to unremitted labour, and who now began to feel that I was not ſo young as I had been at the ſiege of Pavia, were extremely trying,—I did not return, I ſay, to a night of repoſe. I became a very woman, when I looked forward, and endeavoured to picture to myſelf the future ſituation of my family. I watered my pillow with my tears. Often, when I imagined that my whole family were aſleep, I gave vent to my perturbed and diſtracted mind in groans: Marguerite would ſometimes overhear me, and, with the gentleſt ſuggeſtions of her admirable mind, would endeavour to

ſoothe

ſoothe my thoughts to peace. For the preſent, as I have ſaid, my earnings were incompetent, and we found it neceſſary to ſupply the deficiency by the ſale of the few garments, not in immediate uſe, that we ſtill poſſeſſed. What then would be the caſe when theſe were gone, and when, in addition to this, it would be neceſſary to purchaſe, not only food to eat, and a roof to ſhelter, but alſo clothes to cover us?

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

THESE were deficiencies that I anxiouſly anticipated; but there was another evil, upon which I had not calculated, that was ſtill nearer and more overwhelming. The mode of life in which I was now engaged, ſo different from any thing to which I had been accuſtomed, exceſſive fatigue, together with the occaſional heat of the weather, the uneaſineſs of my mind and the ſleepleſſneſs of my nights, all combined to throw me into a fever, which, though it did not laſt long, had raged ſo furiouſly during the period of its continuance, as to leave me in a ſtate of the moſt complete debility. While the diſorder was upon me, I was ſenſible of my danger; and,

as the brilliant and conſolatory proſpects of life ſeemed for ever cloſed upon me, I at firſt regarded my approaching diſſolution with complacency, and longed to be releaſed from a ſeries of woes, in which I had been originally involved by my own folly. This frame of mind however was of no great duration; the more nearly I contemplated the idea of ſeparation from thoſe I loved, the ſmaller was my reſignation. I was unwilling to quit thoſe dear objects by which I ſtill held to this mortal ſcene; I ſhrunk with averſion from that barrier which ſeparates us from all that is new, myſterious and ſtrange. Another train of ideas ſucceeded this, and I began to deſpiſe myſelf for my impatience and cowardice. It was by my vices that my family was involved in a long train of misfortunes; could I ſhrink from partaking what I had not feared to create? The greater were the adverſities

verſities for which they were reſerved, the more ought I to deſire to ſuffer with them. I had already committed the evil; in what remained, it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe I ſhould prove their benefactor and not their foe. It was incumbent on me to ſoothe and to animate them, to enrich their minds with chearfulneſs and courage, and to ſet before them an example of philoſophy and patience. By my faculties of induſtry I was their principal hope; and, whatever we might ſuffer combined, it was probable their ſufferings would be infinitely greater, if deprived of my aſſiſtance. Theſe reflections gave me energy; and it ſeemed as if the reſolute predilection I had conceived for life, contributed much to my recovery.

One thing which ſtrongly confirmed the change my mind underwent in this reſpect, was a converſation that

I overheard, at a time when I was ſuppoſed to be completely in a ſtate of inſenſibility, but when, though I was too much reduced to give almoſt any tokens of life, my faculties of hearing and underſtanding what paſſed around me, were entire. Charles came up to my bed-ſide, laid his hand upon mine as if to feel the ſtate of the ſkin, and, with a handkerchief that was near, wiped away the moiſture that bedewed my face. He had been fitted for many nurſe-like offices by the unwearied attention he had exerted towards me in the paroxyſm of my inſanity. Having finiſhed his taſk, he withdrew from the bed, and burſt into tears. His mother came up to him, drew him to the furtheſt part of the room, and in a low voice began the converſation.

Do, my dear boy, go down ſtairs, and get yourſelf ſomething to eat. You ſee, your papa is quiet now.

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I am afraid that will not laſt long, and then he will be ſo reſtleſs, and toſs about ſo, it is dreadful to ſee him.

I will watch, Charles, and let you know.

Indeed, mamma, I cannot eat now. I will by and by.

You muſt try to eat, Charles, or elſe you will make yourſelf quite ill. If you were ill too, it would be more than I could ſupport.

I will not be ill, mamma. I aſſure you I will not. But, beſides that I have no ſtomach, I cannot bear to eat, when there is hardly enough for my ſiſters.

Eat, boy. Do not trouble yourſelf about that. We ſhall get more when that is gone. God is good, and will take care of us.

I know that God is good, but, for all that, one muſt not expect to have every thing one wiſhes. Though God

is good, there are dreadful misfortunes in the world, and I ſuppoſe we ſhall have our ſhare of them.

Come, Charles, though you are but a boy, you are the beſt boy in the world. You are now almoſt my only comfort, but you will not be able to comfort me, if you do not take care of yourſelf.

Dear mamma!—— Do you know, mamma, I heard that naughty man below ſtairs count up laſt night how much rent you owed him for, and ſwear you ſhould not ſtay any longer, if you did not pay him. If I were a little bigger, I would talk to him ſo that he ſhould not dare to inſult us in our diſtreſs. But, not being big enough, I opened the door, and went into the room, and begged him for God's ſake not to add to your diſtreſs. And, though he is ſo ugly, I took hold of his hand, and kiſſed it. But

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it felt like iron, which put me in mind of his iron heart, and I cried ready to burſt with mortification. He did not ſay hardly a word.

He muſt be paid, Charles: he ſhall be paid.

Do you know, mamma, as ſoon as I left him, I went to the biſhop's gardens, and ſpoke to the gardener. I aſked him, if he had heard that my papa was ill, and he ſaid, he had. He ſaid too, he was very ſorry, and wanted to know what hand we made of it for want of the wages. I told him, we were ſadly off, and the man of the houſe had juſt been affronting me about his rent. But, ſays I, cannot you give me ſomething to do, to weed or to rake? I can dig a little too, and ſcatter ſeed. He aſked, if I knew weeds from flowers? Oh, that I do! ſaid I. Well then, ſaid he, there is not much you can do, but you are a

good boy, and I will put you on the biſhop's liſt. But now, mamma, I have not the heart to work, till I ſee whether papa will get well again.

While poor Charles told his artleſs tale, Marguerite wept over him, and kiſſed him again and again. She called him the beſt child in the world, and ſaid that, if I were but ſo fortunate as to recover, with ſuch a huſband and ſuch a ſon, ſhe ſhould yet be the happieſt of women.

Oh, my poor father! exclaimed Charles. Ever ſince the great hail-ſtorm, I have every hour loved him better than before. I thought that was impoſſible, but he is ſo gentle, ſo kind, ſo good-humoured and ſo patient! I loved him when he was harſh, and when he was out of his mind, but nothing ſo well then as I have done ſince. People that are kind and ſmile, always do one good; but nobody's

nobody's ſmiles are like my father's. It makes me cry with joy ſometimes, when I do but think of them. Pray, papa, added he, coming up to the bed-ſide, and whiſpering, yet with a hurried and paſſionate accent, get well! Do but get well, and we will be ſo happy! Never was there a family ſo happy or ſo loving as we will be!

While he ſpoke thus, I endeavoured to put out my hand, but I could not; I endeavoured to ſmile, but I was unable: my heart was in a feeble, yet ſoothing tranquillity. The accents of love I had heard, dwelt upon my memory. They had talked of diſtreſs, but the ſentiment of love was uppermoſt in my recollection. I was too weak of frame, to ſuffer intellectual diſtreſs; no accents but thoſe which carried balm to my ſpirit, ſeemed capable of reſting upon my ear. From this hour, I regularly grew better, and,

as I recovered, ſeemed to feel more and more vividly how enviable it was to be the head of a loving and harmonious family.

My recovery however was exceedingly ſlow, and it was ſeveral weeks before I had ſo far recruited my ſtrength as to be capable of my ordinary occupations. In the mean time the pecuniary difficulties to which we were expoſed, hourly increaſed; and the chearful, but inſignificant, labours of Charles could contribute little to the ſupport of a family. The melancholy nature of our ſituation might perhaps have been expected to prevent the reſtoration of my health. At firſt however it had not that effect. It ſeemed as if the debilitated ſtate of my animal functions led me, by a ſort of irreſiſtible inſtinct, to reject ideas and reflections which I ſhould then have been unable to endure. I ſaw the anxiety

anxiety and affection of my family, and I was comforted. I ſaw the ſmiles of Marguerite, and I ſeemed inſenſible to the languor, the ſaddened chearfulneſs they expreſſed. I did not perceive that, while I was provided with every thing neceſſary in my condition, my family were in want of the very bread that ſhould ſuſtain exiſtence.

My health in the mean time improved, and my perceptions became proportionably clearer. Symptoms of deſolation and famine, though as much as poſſible covered from my ſight, obtruded themſelves, and were remarked. One day in particular I obſerved various tokens of this nature in ſilence, and with that ſort of bewildered underſtanding, which at once labours for comprehenſion, and reſiſts belief. The day cloſed; and what I had perceived, preſſed upon my mind, and excluded ſleep. Now for the firſt time I exerted

myſelf to recollect in a methodical way the ſtate of my affairs; for the ſeverity of my illneſs had at length ſucceeded to baniſh from me all ideas and all feelings, but what related to the ſenſations it produced and the objects around me; and it was not without effort that I could once more fully call to mind the ſcenes in which I had been engaged. The truth then by regular degrees roſe completely to view; and I began to be aſtoniſhed that my poor wife and children had been able in any manner to get through the horrible evils to which they muſt have been expoſed. This thought I revolved in my mind for near two hours; and, the longer I dwelt upon it, the more perturbed and reſtleſs I grew. At length it became impoſſible for me to hold my contemplations pent up in my own boſom. I turned to Marguerite, and aſked her, whether ſhe were aſleep.

She

She anſwered in the negative: ſhe had been remarking my reſtleſſneſs, and tenderly enquired reſpecting its cauſe.

How long, ſaid I, is it ſince I was taken with the fever?

A month to-morrow, replied ſhe. It was of the moſt malignant and diſtreſſing kind, while it laſted, and I did not expect you to live. But it has left you a fortnight, and I hope, Reginald, you find yourſelf getting ſtrong again.

And ſo we are here in Conſtance, and we have left Switzerland?——

Three months, my love!

I remember very well the letter we received from monſieur Grimſeld; has any further intelligence reached us from that quarter?

None.

None! No ſupply of any kind has reached you?

My

My dear Reginald, talk of ſomething elſe! You will ſoon, I hope, be well: our children are all alive; and the calamity, that has not ſucceeded to ſeparate us, or to diminiſh our circle of love even by a ſingle member, we will learn to bear. Let us fix our attention on the better proſpects that open before us!

Stay, Marguerite! I have other queſtions to aſk. Before you require me to bear the calamities that have overtaken us, let me underſtand what theſe calamities are. While we waited for intelligence from Switzerland, we expended the whole ſum that we brought with us, and I was obliged to hire myſelf to the epiſcopal gardener for bread; was it not ſo?

Indeed, Reginald, you are to blame! Pray, queſtion me no further!

This was our condition ſome time ago; and now, for a month paſt, I have been

been incapable of labour. Marguerite, what have you done?

Indeed, my love, I have been too anxious for you, to think much of any thing elſe. We had ſtill ſome things, you know, that we could contrive to do without, and thoſe I have ſold. Charles too, our excellent-hearted ſon, has lately hired himſelf to the gardener, and has every night brought us home a little, though it was but little.

Dear boy! What children, what a wife, have I brought to deſtruction! Our rent too, ſurely you have not been able to pay that?

Not entirely. In part I have been obliged to pay it.

Ah, I well remember how flinty-hearted a wretch has got the power over us in that reſpect!

He has not turned us out of doors. He threatened hard ſeveral times. At laſt I ſaw it was neceſſary to make an effort,

effort, and the day before yeſterday I paid him half his demand. If I could have avoided that, we might have had a ſupply of food a little longer. I intreated earneſtly for a little further indulgence, but it was in vain. It went againſt the pride and independence of my ſoul to ſue to this man, but it was for you and for my children!

Remorſeleſs wretch! Then every petty reſource we had is gone?

Indeed I do not know that we have any thing more to ſell. I ſearched narrowly yeſterday; but I will examine again to-day. The poor children muſt have ſomething to ſupport them, and their fare has of late been dreadfully ſcanty.

Their fare! What have they eaten?

Bread; nothing elſe for the laſt fortnight!

And yourſelf?

Oh,

Oh, Reginald! it was neceſſary, you know, that I ſhould keep myſelf alive. But, I aſſure you, I have robbed them as little as I could!

Horror, horror! Marguerite, what is it you dream of? I ſee my wife and children dying of hunger, and you talk to me of hope and of proſpects! Why has this detail of miſeries been concealed from me! Why have I been ſuffered, with accurſed and unnatural appetite, to feed on the vitals of all I love!

Reginald! even ſelfiſhneſs itſelf would have taught us that! It is to your recovery that we look for our future ſupport!

Mock me not, I adjure you, with ſenſeleſs words! You talk idly of the future, while the tremendous preſent bars all proſpect to that future! We are periſhing by inches! We have no proviſion for the coming day! No, no; ſomething

ſomething deſperate, ſomething yet unthought of, muſt be attempted! I will not ſit inactive, and ſee my offſpring around me die in ſucceſſion. No, by heaven! Though I am ſtarving like Ugolino, I am not, like Ugolino, ſhut up in a dungeon! The world is open; its ſcenes are wide; the reſources it offers are to the bold and deſpairing, innumerable! I am a father, and will ſhow myſelf worthy of the name!

Reginald! torture me not by language like this! Think what it is to be indeed a father, and make yourſelf that! Be careful of yourſelf; complete your recovery,—and leave the reſt to me! I have conducted it thus far, nor am I yet without hope. Eight days ago I applied to the ſecreterary of the palace, repreſenting your caſe as a retainer of the biſhop, diſabled by ſickneſs, and with a family unprovided for. Till yeſterday I got

no

no anſwer to my memorial, and then he informed me, that you had been ſo ſhort a time in employ, that nothing could be done for you. But to-day I will throw myſelf at the feet of the biſhop himſelf, who arrived laſt night only from the other ſide of the lake.

Every word that Marguerite uttered, went to my heart. It was not long before the dawn of the day, and the truths I had heard were further confirmed to me by the organ of ſight. The ſentiments of this night produced a total revolution in me, and I was no longer the feeble convaleſcent that the ſetting ſun of the preceding day had left me. The film was removed from my eyes, and I ſurveyed not the objects around me with a glaſſy eye and unapprehenſive obſervation. All the powers I poſſeſſed were alert and in motion. To my ſuſpicious and hurried gaze the apartment appeared as if

ſtripped

ſtripped of its moveables, and left naked, a manſion in which for deſpair to take up his abode. My children approached me; I ſeemed to read the wan and emaciated traces of death in their countenances. This perhaps was in ſome degree the painting of my too conſcious thoughts. But there needed no exaggeration to awaken torture in my boſom, when, thus ſtimulated, I obſerved for the firſt time the dreadful change that had taken place in Marguerite. Her colour was gone; her cheeks were ſunk; her eye had the quickneſs and diſcompoſure expreſſive of debility. I took hold of her hand, and found it cold, emaciated and white. I preſſed it to my lips with agony; a tear unbidden fell from my eye, and reſted upon it. Having finiſhed my examination, I took my hat, and was haſtening to eſcape into the ſtreet. Marguerite noted my motions, and anxiouſly

anxiouſly interpoſed to prevent my deſign. She laid her hand on my arm, gently, yet in a manner full of irreſiſtible expoſtulation.

Where would you go? What have you purpoſed? Do not,—Oh, do not, deſtroy a family, to whom your life, your ſobriety and prudence are indiſpenſible!

I took her hand within both mine. Compoſe yourſelf, my love! I have been your enemy too much already, to be capable now, ſo much as in thought, of adding to my guilt! I need an interval for muſing and determination. I will return in a very ſhort time, and you ſhall be the confident of my thoughts!

With wild and impatient ſpirit I repaſſed in idea the whole hiſtory of my life. But principally I dwelt in recollection upon the marquis of Damville, that generous friend, that munificent

ficent benefactor, whoſe confidence I had ſo ill repaid. Damville! exclaimed I, you truſted to me your daughter, the deareſt thing you knew on earth; you believed that the wretch did not live who could be unjuſt to ſo rich a pledge. Look down, look down, oh, beſt of men! from the heaven to which your virtues have raiſed you, and ſee of how much baſeneſs man, yes, the man you diſdained not to call your friend, is capable! But, no! a ſight like this might well convert the heaven you dwell in to hell! You truſted her to me; I have robbed her! You enriched her mind with the nobleſt endowments; I have buried them in the mire of the vileſt condition! All her generous, her unwearied exertions are fruitleſs; by my evil genius they are blaſted! I have made her a mother, only that ſhe might behold her children periſhing with hunger!

They

They ſtretch out their hands to me for the ſmalleſt portion of that inheritance, which I have ſquandered in more than demoniac vice! This, this is the fruit of my miſdeeds! I am now draining the laſt dregs of that miſchief, of which I have ſo wickedly, ſo baſely been the author!

As I returned, I met Marguerite, who was come from her attempt upon the biſhop. He had received her paper, and delivered it to his ſecretary, that very ſecretary who had already diſappointed all her expectations from that quarter. She had attempted to ſpeak, to adjure the biſhop, whatever he did, not to deliver her over to a man by whom her hopes had been ſo cruelly fruſtrated; but the tumult of the ſcene drowned her voice, and the hurry and confuſion overpowered her efforts. They however drew ſuch a degree of attention on her, that, in the

diſſentions

diſſentions which religious broils at that time ſpread in Conſtance, ſhe was ſuſpected of preſſing thus earneſtly towards the perſon of the biſhop with no good deſign, and in fine was rudely thruſt out of the palace. She had not recovered from the agitation into which ſhe had been thrown, when I met her. I eagerly enquired into the cauſe of her apparent diſtreſs; but ſhe ſhook her head mournfully, and was ſilent. I eaſily underſtood where ſhe had been, and the failure of her experiment.

All then, ſaid I, is at an end. Now, Marguerite, you muſt give up your experiments, and leave to me the cure of evils of which I only am the author. I will return this inſtant to the garden of the palace, and reſume the ſituation I formerly occupied.

For God's ſake, Reginald, what is it you mean? You have juſt acquired

ſtrength to ſeek the benefit of air. The leaſt exertion fatigues you. At this moment, the little walk you have taken has covered you with perſpiration. You could not dig or ſtoop for a quarter of an hour without being utterly exhauſted.

Marguerite, I will not ſit down tamely, and ſee my family expire. In many caſes it is reaſonable to bid a valetudinarian take care of himſelf. But our ſituation is beyond that. I muſt do ſomething. Extraordinary circumſtances often bring along with them extraordinary ſtrength. No man knows, till the experiment, what he is capable of effecting. I feel at this moment no debility; and I doubt not that the deſpair of my mind will give redoubled energy to my efforts.

While I ſpoke thus, I was conſcious that I had little more than the ſtrength of a new-born child. But I could not

endure at ſuch a time to remain in inactivity. I felt as much aſhamed of the debilitated ſtate in which my fever had left me, as I could have done of the moſt inglorious effeminacy and cowardice of ſoul. I was determined to relieve my family, or periſh in the attempt. If all my efforts were vain, I could not better finiſh my career, than exhauſted, ſinking, expiring under a laſt exertion to diſcharge the duties of my ſtation.

We returned into the houſe. Marguerite took from a cloſet the laſt remnant of proviſions we had, the purchaſe of poor Charles's labour of the preceding day. There was a general conteſt who ſhould eſcape from receiving any part in the diſtribution. Charles had withdrawn himſelf, and was not to be found. Julia endeavoured to abſcond, but was ſtopped by Louiſa and her mother. She had wept

wept ſo much, that inanition ſeemed more dangerous for her, than perhaps for any other of the circle. No one can conceive, who has not felt it, how affecting a conteſt of this kind muſt appear to me, ſenſible as I was to the danger that their virtue and generous affection were the prelude only to their common deſtruction. I ſaid, There was a general conteſt who ſhould avoid all ſhare in the diſtribution; but I recollect that the little Marguerite, two years and a half old, exclaimed at firſt, I am ſo hungry, mamma! But, watching, as ſhe carefully did, every thing that paſſed, ſhe preſently laid down her bread upon the table, in ſilence, and almoſt untouched; and, being aſked, Why ſhe did ſo? ſhe replied in a tone of ſpeaking ſenſibility, Thank you, I am not hungry now!

This ſcene made an impreſſion on my mind, never to be forgotten. It

blaſted and corrupted all the pulſes of my ſoul. A little before, I had reconciled myſelf to poverty; I had even brought myſelf to regard it with chearfulneſs. But the ſentiment was now reverſed. I could endure it, I could ſteel myſelf againſt its attacks; but never from this hour, in the wildeſt paroxyſms of enthuſiaſm, has it been the topic of my exultation or my panegyric. No change of circumſtances, no inundation of wealth, has had the power to obliterate from my recollection what I then ſaw. A family periſhing with hunger; all that is deareſt to you in the world ſinking under the moſt dreadful of all the ſcourges with which this ſublunary ſcene is ever afflicted; no help near; no proſpect but of ſtill accumulating diſtreſs; a death, the ſloweſt, yet the moſt certain and the moſt agonizing, that can befal us; no, there is nothing

thing that has power to rend all the ſtrings of the heart like this! From this moment, the whole ſet of my feelings was changed. Avarice deſcended, and took poſſeſſion of my ſoul. Haunted, as I perpetually was, by images of the plague of famine, nothing appeared to me ſo valuable as wealth; nothing ſo deſirable as to be placed at the utmoſt poſſible diſtance from want. An appetite of this kind is inſatiable; no diſtance ſeems ſufficiently great; no obſtacles, mountains on mountains of gold, appear an adequate ſecurity to bar from us the approach of the monſter we dread.

While I ſpeak of the ſentiments which in the ſequel were generated in my mind by what I now ſaw, I am ſuſpending my narrative in a criſis at which a family, intereſting, amiable and virtuous, is reduced to the loweſt ſtate of humiliation and diſtreſs.

They are moments like theſe, that harden the human heart, and fill us with inextinguiſhable hatred and contempt for our ſpecies. They tear off the trappings and decoration of poliſhed ſociety, and ſhow it in all its hideouſneſs. The wanton eye of pampered pride pleaſes itſelf with the ſpectacle of cities and palaces, the ſtately column and the ſwelling arch. It obſerves at hand the buſy ſcene, where all are occupied in the various purſuits of pleaſure or induſtry, and admires the concert, the wide-ſpreading confederacy, by means of which each after his mode is unconſciouſly promoting the objects of others. Cheated by the outſide of things, we denominate this a vaſt combination for general benefit. The poor and the famiſhed man contemplates the ſcene with other thoughts. Unbribed to admire and applaud, he ſees in it a confederacy of hoſtility and

general

general oppreſſion. He ſees every man purſuing his ſelfiſh ends, regardleſs of the wants of others. He ſees himſelf contemptuouſly driven from the circle, where the reſt of his fellow-citizens are buſily and profitably engaged. He lives in the midſt of a crowd, without one friend to intereſt himſelf for his welfare. He lives in the midſt of plenty, from the participation of which he is driven by brutal menaces and violence. No man who has not been placed in his ſituation, can imagine the ſenſations, with which, overwhelmed as he is with domeſtic ruin and deſpair, he beholds the riot, the prodigality, the idiot oſtentation, the ſenſeleſs expence, with which he is ſurrounded on every ſide. What were we to do? Were we to beg along the ſtreets? Were we to intreat for wretched offals at rich men's doors? Alas, this, it was to be feared, even if

we ſtooped to the miſerable attempt, inſtead of ſatisfying wants for ever new, would only prolong in the bitterneſs of anguiſh the fate for which we were reſerved!——

An unexpected relief at this time preſented itſelf. While the ſcanty meal I have mentioned was yet unfiniſhed, a letter was preſented me incloſing under its cover a bill of one hundred crowns. The letter was from Peter, the faithful ſervant, whom we had found it neceſſary to diſmiſs three months before, when we quitted our reſidence in Switzerland. It informed us that, as ſoon as he had parted from us, he had ſet out on his return to his native town, next adjacent to my paternal reſidence, that he found his father had died a ſhort time before, and that, from the ſale of his effects, he had reaped an inheritance, to triple the amount of the ſum he had now

forwarded

forwarded to us. He had heard by accident of the death of our friend in Switzerland, and the character of his ſucceſſor, and dreaded that the conſequences might prove highly injurious to us. He had ſtill ſome buſineſs to ſettle with the ſurviving branches of his family, but that would be over in a few weeks, and then, if we would allow him, he would return to his dear maſter, and afford us every aſſiſtance in his power. The little property that had now fallen to him would prevent him from being a burthen, and he would hire a ſpot of land, and remain near us, if we refuſed him the conſolation of returning to his former employment.

What a reproach was it to me, that I, deſcended from one of the moſt illuſtrious families in Europe, the heir of an ample patrimony, and receiving a ſtill larger fortune in marriage,

riage, ſhould, by the total neglect and profligate defiance of the duties incumbent on me, have reduced myſelf ſo low, as to be indebted to a peaſant and a menial for the means of ſaving my family from inſtant deſtruction! This was a deep and fatal wound to the pride of my ſoul. There was however no alternative, no poſſibility of rejecting the ſupply afforded us at ſo eventful a moment. We determined to uſe it for the preſent, and to repay it with the earlieſt opportunity; and in the following week, in ſpite of the remonſtrances of Marguerite, the yet feeble ſtate of my health, and the penalties annexed to the proceeding, I ſet off for the canton of Soleure, determined, if poſſible, to wreſt the little ſtaff of my family from the hand that ſo baſely detained it.

I paſſed through Zurich and a part of the canton of Baſle without obſta-

cle;

cle; theſe parts of Switzerland had not ſuffered from the calamity which had occaſioned our exile. In proceeding further, I found it neceſſary to aſſume a diſguiſe, and to avoid large towns and frequented roads. I reached at length the well known ſcene in which I had ſo lately conſumed twelve months of my life; in which I firſt began to breathe (to breathe, not to be refreſhed) from ruin, beggary and exile. There was no pleaſing recollection annexed to this ſpot; it was a remembrancer of ſhame, ſorrow and remorſe. Yet, ſuch is the power of objects once familiar, reviſited after abſence, that my eye ran over them with delight, I felt lightened from the wearineſs of the journey, and found that the recollection of pains paſt over and ſubdued was capable of being made a ſource of gratification. The mountains among which I had wandered,

dered, and consumed, as it were, the last dregs of my insanity, surrounded me; the path in which I was travelling led along one of their ridges. I had performed this part of my journey by night; and the first gleams of day now began to streak the horizon. I looked towards the cottage, the distant view of which had so often, in moments of the deepest despair, awakened in my heart the soothings of sympathy and affection. I saw that as yet it remained in its forlorn condition, and had undergone no repair; while the lands around, which had lately experienced the superintendence of Marguerite, had met with more attention, and began to resume the marks of culture. I sighed for the return of those days and that situation, which, while present to me, had passed unheeded and unenjoyed.

I repaired

I repaired to the houſe of my late protector, now the reſidence of monſieur Grimſeld. He was a meagre, ſhrivelled figure; and, though ſcarcely arrived at the middle of human life, exhibited all the marks of a premature old age. I diſcloſed myſelf to him, and began warmly to expoſtulate with him upon the profligacy of his conduct. He changed colour, and betrayed ſymptoms of confuſion, the moment I announced myſelf. While I preſſed him with the barbarity of his conduct, the dreadful effects it had already produced, and the inconteſtible juſtice of my claim, he ſtammered, and began to propoſe terms of accommodation. During this converſation we were alone. After ſome time however a ſervant entered the room, and the countenance of the maſter aſſumed an expreſſion of ſatisfaction and

confidence. He eagerly ſeized on the occaſion which preſented itſelf, and, inſtantly changing his tone, called on his ſervant to aſſiſt him in ſecuring a criminal againſt the ſtate. I at firſt reſiſted, but Grimſeld, perceiving this, applied to his bell with great vehemence, and three other ſervants made their appearance, whoſe employment was in the field, but who had now accidentally come into the houſe for refreſhment. I had arms; but I found it impracticable to effect my eſcape; and I ſoon felt that, by yielding to the impulſe of indignation, and puniſhing Grimſeld on the ſpot for his perfidy, I might ruin, but could not forward, the affair in which I was engaged.

I was conducted to priſon; and the thoughts produced in me by this ſudden reverſe, were extremely melancholy

choly and diſcouraging. Grimſeld was a man of opulence and power; I was without friends, or the means of procuring friends. The law expreſsly condemned my return; and what had I not to fear from law, when abetted and inforced by the hand of power? I might be impriſoned for ten years; I might be impriſoned for life. I began earneſtly to wiſh that I had remained with my family, and given up at leaſt all preſent hopes of redreſs. It would be a dreadful accumulation of all my calamities, if now at laſt I and my children were deſtined to ſuffer, perhaps to periſh, in a ſtate of ſeparation; and the laſt conſolations of the wretched, thoſe of ſuffering, ſympathiſing and condoling with each other, were denied us.

Full of theſe tragical forebodings, I threw myſelf at firſt on the floor of

my cell in a ſtate little ſhort of the moſt abſolute deſpair. I exclaimed upon my adverſe fortune, which was never weary of perſecuting me. I apoſtrophiſed, with tender and diſtracted accents, my wife and children, from whom I now ſeemed to be cut off by an everlaſting divorce. I called upon death to put an end to theſe tumults and emotions of the ſoul, which were no longer to be borne.

In a ſhort time however I recovered myſelf, procured the implements of writing, and drew up, in the ſtrong and impreſſive language of truth, a memorial to the council of the ſtate. I was next to conſider how this was to reach its deſtination; for there was ſome danger that it might be intercepted by the vigilance and malignity of my adverſary. I deſired to ſpeak with

with the keeper of the priſon. He had ſome recollection of me, and a ſtill more diſtinct one of my family. He concurred with the general ſentiment, in a ſtrong averſion to the character of Grimſeld. As I preſſed upon him the hardſhip of my caſe, and the fatal conſequences with which it might be attended, I could perceive that he fully entered into the feeling with which I wiſhed him to be impreſſed. He blamed my raſhneſs in returning to Switzerland in defiance of the poſitive prohibition that had been iſſued; but promiſed at all events that my paper ſhould be delivered to the preſident tomorrow morning.

I remained three days without an anſwer, and theſe days were to me an eternity. I anticipated every kind of misfortune; I believed that law and malice

malice had ſucceeded to the ſubverſion of equity. At length however I was delivered from my apprehenſions and perplexity, and ſummoned to appear before the council. It was well for me perhaps that I had to do with a government ſo ſimple and moderate as that of Switzerland. I obtained redreſs. It was referred to an arbitration of neighbours to ſet a fair price on my property, and then decreed that, if monſieur Grimſeld refuſed the purchaſe, the ſum ſhould be paid me out of the coffers of the ſtate. He was alſo condemned in a certain fine for the fraud he had attempted to commit. The affair, thus put in train, was ſoon completed; and I returned with joy, having effected the object of my journey, to my anxious and expecting family. Soon after we removed to the ſpot we had choſen on the eaſtern bank of

of the lake, where we remained for the ſix following years in a ſtate of peace and tranquillity.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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